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JAPAN'S DEFEAT—AND AFTER

FOR the second time Quebec becomes the hub of the earth. What Churchill and Roosevelt decide in the old French citadel beside the St. Lawrence will govern the lives of tens of millions of men and women, in factories and camps, on the sea and in the air, all over the world, for a year to come. Their talks might have been even more decisive if Marshal Stalin could have joined them. His absence, however, gives us some clue to the agenda of this meeting. The European campaign was sketched in its grand outlines long ago. The strategical plan goes so well that it calls for no modification. The material needs of the armies which are now encircling the Reich have all been satisfied. Everything that the Allies are likely to need in Europe, from planes and barges to boots and parachutes, is already manufactured. If Stalin is absent from Quebec, the main reason is that these deliberations turn round a war in which he is not as yet involved. For the present the war against Germany engages and even strains all Russia's resources.

We take it, then, that what will mainly concern the leaders of the two Western Powers at Quebec will be the strategy of the Far-Eastern war this winter, perhaps after the battle in Europe is won. There is little scope in a modern war for improvisation. The plan of campaign must have been worked out long in advance if the supplies are to be available that a given scheme of operations demands. It was wise of Mr. Churchill, always sensitive to transatlantic opinion, to fly to the New World for this purpose. His gesture may do something to convince Americans that this country is in earnest over the war in the Far East, and will throw its weight into it. We also have our losses and defeats to reverse. We have made ourselves responsible for Burma and the Malay Peninsula, to say nothing of India, while Canada, Australia and New Zealand are also Pacific Powers. For Britain, as for the Americans, the destruction of Japan's military power ranks high among our vital interests.

How far, when they have taken their strategical decisions, are the two Western leaders likely to go in exploring the politics of the Asiatic theatre of war? At Cairo they startled the world by stripping Japan in advance of all the imperial possessions she has collected during the past half-century. At Quebec it will not be easy to separate strategy from politics. China presents problems so difficult that the President has recently had to send two of his ablest lieutenants, Mr. Wallace and Mr. Nelson, to solve them. The feud between Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists still distracts the Republic and halves its available military power. Inflation renders good government impossible, while the tendencies towards personal autocracy and Fascism at Chungking depress the younger generation of progressives. The Chinese armies are so wretchedly fed that they have to give to foraging the energy that should go into fighting.

These distresses are aggravated by the feeling which the whole Chinese nation shares, in spite of its reticence and courtesy, that its Western Allies have done singularly little to help it. In spite of the hard-won victory of our troops in the recent campaign in Manipur and North Burma, that feeling persists. These operations, which engaged a quarter of a million of British and Indian troops, began as a campaign to open the Burma Road, were complicated by the Japanese counter-offensive against Assam, and left, unhappily, an ugly trail of misunderstanding behind them. Friction has been increased by the leakage into the American press of some far from flattering opinions about our government of India and the *morale* of our "mercenary" Indian army which the President's personal envoy, Mr. William Phillips, expressed in a confidential despatch. The feelings of Indians and Chinese are relevant factors in the strategical problem, which leaders of insight and imagination would not ignore. Both peoples are, as it happens, near the lowest ebb of their strength. The Chinese are exhausted by seven adverse years of war, while the Indians, sullen, defeated and torn by their sectarian divisions, have rarely felt, in their long struggle for freedom, so helpless and apathetic. But unless these two nations—and, with them, the other peoples of South-east Asia—can be induced to feel that our coming victory over Japan is also theirs, it will not bring to Asia the stimulus and hope it ought to bestow. If that is what Americans mean when they criticise our management in India, we are with them. We and they are equal partners in this tangled and anxious Asiatic problem, and for our part we welcome their concern in the Indian corner of it. What together we have to do is not merely to smash the Japanese military machine: we have in our joint keeping the reputation of the white man in his dealings with the brown and yellow peoples, who possess a civilisation at least as sensitive as our own and much more venerable.

There has been no evidence so far that either Mr. Churchill or Mr. Roosevelt is aware of this problem of leadership. Neither of them has said or done anything that suggests a wish to win the trust of the Asiatic peoples. No whisper suggests that anything of that kind is likely to come out of Quebec. What may be discussed, it is said, is rather the disposal, when the war is won, of several islands, most of them Japanese possessions, which are thought to be the strategical keys to power in this quarter of the world. America may wish to own or to lease these bases. The British Empire, in its turn, shows every sign of intending to recover Hong Kong and to re-instate its capitalist interests in Burma and Malaya. The effect on the Asiatic mind of such claims as these will not be happy. It is only too easy to interpret the pattern of power that seems to be emerging from the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in an imperialistic sense. Each of the three Great Powers equipped with its veto, its industrial potential and its irresistible air-arm, will have its own "region," which in effect it will police. It is quite easy to assign Eastern Europe to Russia, Western Europe to Great Britain and the American Hemisphere to the United States; but to whom does the Asiatic region fall? Unless Britain and the United States can agree on a Far Eastern policy which Russia and China are prepared to endorse, and which aims genuinely at the political freedom and social welfare of the colonial peoples of the region, there is a grave danger lest conflicts over markets, access to raw materials, air routes and bases may destroy the unity of the Great Powers' Council before there is a chance to develop it into the representative Authority which the world needs.

How Long a War ?

After a phase of understandable exuberance, in which the impression was conveyed that little lay between General Eisenhower's forces and Berlin, the more judicious of the war correspondents at the front are now hinting in their despatches that the campaign in the West may outlive the autumn. Will it continue into 1945? So far as organised, large-scale military operations are concerned, the answer turns on an equation in logistics whose factors are known only to the opposing High Commands. On the one side, how long will it take the Allies to mount an offensive against the Reich backed with adequate strength to sustain its impetus across the Rhine? If the delay is short, the forces immediately available to Field-Marshal Model should be too weak and disorganised to offer formidable resistance. If, however, there is a long pause, Model will have time to rebuild some of his depleted divisions with depot drafts, and replacement tanks will doubtless be forthcoming. Moreover, given sufficient breathing-space, the enemy might be able to fill gaps in his western defences with troops brought from Norway. How long, on his side, will it take to effect such re-grouping and also to bring up the fresh divisions which are presumably being improvised in the Reich from the last scrapings of the man-power barrel? In this race against time on both sides, the capture of Le Havre and Ostende is good news; and we should not under-estimate the importance of air-transport as a supply factor in the Allies' favour. On the other hand, the enemy still holds Brest and still commands the estuary of the Scheldt. General Bradley's successful reconnaissances in force through the Ardennes on to German soil should not blind us to the fact that the enemy's real powers of resistance on the Siegfried line and the Rhine have yet to be tested.

The Eastern Front

In estimating the probable duration of the war in Europe the biggest single factor remains to be considered—the intentions and prospects of the Red Army. In the Balkans the Russians are reaping the harvest of their victory on the Pruth. Bulgaria has been "liberated" from its pro-German Regents; and though the leaders of the new Government, Colonel Veltchiev (head of the Russo-phil Military League) and M. Giorgiev, are better known for conspiratorial than for democratic proclivities, they will doubtless serve the U.S.S.R.'s purpose as *pro tem.*, Balkan style, Badoglios until the Fatherland Front is ready to take over. For the moment the main consideration is that the Bulgarian army will no longer aid Germany even to the extent of garrisoning eastern Serbia, and Marshal Malinovski has a clear road to Belgrade. With the railways to Greece cut, and communications throughout Jugoslavia increasingly harried by Marshal Tito's forces, the enemy's tenure of the Balkans is clearly collapsing. If his divisions in Greece, Albania and Southern Yugoslavia can be extricated, an effort may be made to hold the line of the Drave; but even this position cannot be tenable for long, since the Red Army, with Rumanian support, appears to be advancing in strength through Transylvania and, even with a modicum of German stiffening, the Hungarian army seems unlikely to withstand a full-scale Russian assault. It is therefore on the cards that, before the last leaves are off the trees, the Red Army will be at the gates of Vienna. To-day the enemy's main concentration is still in western Poland, where the final pitched battle of the war in the East may have to be fought; but the decisive factor may well prove to be the Russian's great outflanking movement up the Danube valley.

The Terror in Germany

For the first time since June, 1934, Hitler has openly admitted the existence of a political opposition. Now, as then, he combats it by terror. It is reported that he is showing a film in which the slow death of the generals he has hanged is presented in all its lingering horror. Eight minutes while the noose is slowly tightened. Now he announces that seven politicians alleged to have co-operated with the generals on July 20, have been sentenced to death. The names which have been announced seem to have been chosen because they were those of leaders of anti-Nazi groups. The death sentences are meant to terrorise their followers.

The Nazi statement says that "all threads were joined in Gördeler's hands." But the group is not homogeneous. Gördeler, at the head of the conspiracy, was a National Liberal and a close friend of General Beck, Chief of Staff of the German Army until 1938, when Hitler's first aggression began to materialise, namely, the rape of Austria. Before this happened Beck resigned. Gördeler had left his office as Mayor of Leipzig two years previously, and came to England before 1938 in order to warn this country of the danger of Nazi aggression. That is, both Beck and Gördeler had left the Nazi orbit long before the War, in contrast to the other Generals who played Hitler's game until the beginning of failure in Russia.

Helldorf, one of the Nazi desperadoes of the old school, and former police president of Berlin, had been responsible for some of the most atrocious crimes committed by the Third Reich. The fact that his name was included in the list of the symbolical seven tends to show that there is something of a resurrection of that internal Nazi Party camarilla which originally centred round Gregor Strasser and later lead to the Röhm opposition. Helldorf's death may be a warning to other would-be Strassers and would-be Röhms.

The names of the Conservative members of the seven include Von Hassell, former Ambassador to Rome, a friend of Neurath. He was a diplomat of the old school, but level-headed enough to see that the "Axis" policy was bound to lead to disaster. He was dismissed from office in 1938. Lejeune-Jung, a former Conservative member of the Reichstag, and Wirmer, a lawyer, were both employees of big business firms. Trott zu Solz, who is alleged to have acted as something like a go-between in Stockholm, had been a Foreign Office official, apparently also of the Conservative type.

But the most interesting and revealing name in the list is that of Leuschner, mentioned by the Nazis as Vice-Chancellor designate. Leuschner was one of the leading trade unionists and Socialists in Germany, Minister of the Interior in Hessen, and twice put into a concentration camp by the Nazis. There is no reason to doubt that he and Gördeler had been connected. What working-class support he may have promised the conspiracy we do not know; but his death is clearly intended by the Nazis as a warning against Left wing opposition.

Willkie on Sovereignty

Mr. Wendell Willkie holds no office in the United States and is not even a candidate for office. He shares, however, with Mr. Henry Wallace, the respect and sympathy of millions of progressive voters in both the traditional parties. How much then is he likely to achieve by the bold and far-sighted appeal, which the *Daily Express* has published on this side of the Atlantic, for less idolatry of the fetish of national sovereignty? Both parties, as he points out, have on their platforms, in almost identical language, qualified their acceptance of international organisation for the preservation of peace by phrases which safeguard sovereignty. These qualifications were heavily underlined both by the President and by Governor Dewey. No effective organisation, whether for peace or for any other common purpose can be built this basis:

> When every party to the proposed agreeme stands pat and refuses to yield any individ right or privilege, there is no agreement. . . . W we shall create is, at best, a consultative pact peace-loving nations . . . which will not di in fact from most of the alliances of history.

This is well said. An ally does sacrifice somethi of his sovereignty when he pledges himself unco ditionally to go to war if his partner is attacke So far as we can gather from the scanty ne that leaks out of Dumbarton Oaks, each of t Great Powers, armed with a veto, will be free all circumstances to decide what, if anythin it will do with its armed forces: it can, mor over, veto any collective action it dislikes, no merely against itself but against its client Whether there will be, even in justiciable di putes, any absolute obligation to submit arbitration is not yet clear. Into these detai Mr. Willkie does not in this article enter, b he does what will seem to many Americans eve bolder: he assails the rule which permits minority of one senator in three to veto a treaty It takes a brave man to criticise the Constitutio in this way. In practice the Senate feels th it is the proprietor of American sovereignt and each Senator owns a ninety-sixth part of i A specially sinister plank in the Republica platform would restore the Senate's veto, whic Mr. Hull had circumvented, over bi-later agreements for the reduction of tariffs. Increas ingly, as Mr. Willkie argues, what are technicall "agreements" are taking the place of "treaties" and often a resolution of the two Houses o Congress will serve. These can be adopted b a simple majority. Just how far Mr. Willki would go in this direction we are not sure. Coul a series of agreements and resolutions serve instead of a Peace Treaty? That is at least conceivable. This unique war may end informally without armistice, peace treaty o conference.

Labour and Coalition

The Labour Party had a happy inspiration when it called a conference of the parties tha are its comrades in the Dominions. Two o them are filling the heavy responsibilities o office admirably; while in Canada, which wa most impressively represented by Mr. Coldwell, chairman of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, their prospects are brighter than they have ever looked before. At the public session Mr. Attlee and the leaders of the various delegations, made very proper speeches. But interest was centred in Mr. Morrison's speech at the private session on Tuesday. He argued that the Coalition must continue unbroken, until victory has been won, not merely over Germany, but over Japan as well. "There is no basic distinction between the war with Germany and the war with Japan. . . . We cannot break up the Government until peace has been achieved." But are we to understand that this also means that there can be no general election until Japan is beaten; that is to say for perhaps two years more? This ambiguity will have to be cleared up before the party's conference meets in the autumn, and it would be wise to do so at once. When Labour, rightly and inevitably entered the Coalition, it was to assure our survival as a free nation. Germany was then the only enemy. It is necessary to defeat Japan but she cannot deal us the mortal blow that only a Coalition could ward off. Therefore there could be no national reason why Labour should not separate itself from the Coalition when Germany is defeated. Indeed it must, if it is to survive as a party, disassociate itself from Coalition policy and obviously inadequate Conservative projects for such matters as housing and Town and Country Planning. Of course it might well be advantageous for Labour to go into opposition at the end of the European war with an election to follow in a year's time. Unfortunately, the decision of the date of the election lies with the Prime Minister.

THE MIND OF THE GERMAN ARMY

ow that complete military victory over ermany is in prospect and the occupation of eich territory by the Allies a certainty, the uestion of the political mood of the German eople in the face of defeat moves rapidly into e foreground of Allied preoccupations. We ve yet to see what precise form victory will take; hether the Nazi Party will succeed in prolong- g the struggle in German territory and handing e entire people over to a gigantic, bloody and rhaps long-drawn-out mopping up operation, whether a collapse from below will frustrate is scheme and permit a swift and bloodless cupation. The Party cannot expect an im- ediate gain from either solution. But on a ng-term basis it probably sees a future for self in a carefully organised underground resist- ce movement which would strive to make life tolerable for the occupation authorities, pro- oking them into reprisals and gradually forcing em into the position that the Nazis them- elves found so embarrassing in occupied ountries.

To the mass of the people, however, the situa- on at this stage must look different. They have eir immediate future, individual and collective, think of. The question is, are they thinking of , and if so, in what terms? The general political mper among the German masses, the trend of eir political thought, their conception of their wn and the nation's future, however vague and norientated, are of immediate interest and concern the Allies, for the very purpose of efficient ccupational administration. No one knows etter than the Germans themselves that even e most total and ruthless military occupation equires some political frame, or at least a political ood or disposition, on which to rest.

The question cannot be answered with any egree of certainty. But a rough appreciation is ossible. Some 300,000 German prisoners have so r fallen into allied hands in the West alone since -day. Even allowing for a proportion of non-Germans among them their number is large enough o permit the assumption that they represent fair cross-section of the German people. Their iews on Germany's post-defeat situation must be orth having and studying. The majority of hem are, of course, young men under thirty, and heir attitude may well exercise a decisive influence n the rest, the older generation and the women, ho are most unlikely to outweigh them in the eneral trend of opinion. What are these men hinking? How do they view the future? The nswer, as far as can be judged from their reaction to questions by camp authorities, is merely negative. The mass of the German people, as reflected by their representatives in Allied prison camps, seems to have no conception whatsoever of its political future. Nor does it show any visible interest in it. This sounds unbelievable, but on the strength of the available evidence it seems, nevertheless, the truth.

These men fall roughly into three categories. To begin with, there is a definite hard core whose complete faith in the Nazi doctrine is unshaken. The disasters of the German armies in foreign lands have done nothing to undermine their belief in the infallibility of their political creed, and similar disasters on their native soil will presumably have just as little effect on their fanaticism. This fanaticism rests primarily upon purely emotional and quite irrational foundations, and has no perceivable basis in experience to support it. These are obviously the men on whom Himmler relies for his fight to the last corner. They are the men who will be available for a Nazi underground organisation, and they must be reckoned upon to have the support of their womenfolk, if of no one else. Their numbers are small, but they are in inverse proportion to their nuisance value.

The second category is much larger, and includes members of the Party. They have apparently made up their minds that Nazi Party and Nazi State as they know them are finished and will not survive defeat, and they are not prepared to weep many tears over them. But they make a very definite mental reservation with regard to the person of Hitler, who occupies a special place in their thoughts. They see him not so much as the war leader, or the Head of the State or the Party Leader, but rather as the father of the whole nation and of all Germans. In their minds he embodies something that transcends their immediate needs and problems and even the immediate fate of the Fatherland. They are convinced that he has nothing but the welfare of "his people" at heart, and would be prepared to sacrifice everything (even the Party, perhaps) for his sake. This provides a curious key to German morale. Hitler, in their view, continues the war because he knows that he can win it. If he knew he couldn't win it, he would call it off at once because it would then injure "his people." Hitler, in fact, is the one and only stable factor in their whole political outlook. He provides the continuity, and many of these men are quite incapable of visualising any future of Germany without him. If you remove Hitler from their mental picture, it does not disintegrate, but simply fades out, and behind it is nothing. This frame of mind produces astonishing results. Even those who agree that Nazism is doomed, when asked who, in their view, would or should take over, make peace, reconstruct Germany, answer blandly: why Hitler, of course. It does not even occur to them that he might get washed away with the tide.

It is chiefly among this category of young Germans that, again and again, a very odd kind of self-pity manifests itself. They agree that the war is lost (and they will even agree that it was partly due to "mistakes" made by Hitler personally), but they feel that, after all, it is a great shame and pity, and that they have deserved better of the world. They seem genuinely to believe that they really had almost succeeded in putting Europe in order, that everyone was just beginning to feel happy and content, that they had done a really worthwhile job for which the world should have been grateful to them—and now this. Suddenly they find themselves in a hostile and ungrateful world, surrounded by false friends (this goes in particular against Frenchmen whom they really thought they had won over), and everyone anxious to smash up what they had built up with so much love and care!

There remains the third category, and this constitutes the majority. They have no love for National Socialism or for Hitler. The sooner the whole outfit disappears the better, because then, and only then, peace will come. But peace, in their minds, does not seem to mean anything more tangible than return to their families, home-life, the end of the fighting ordeal. Beyond that very few of them are able to think. They accept Allied occupation of Germany as a matter of course, and curiously enough are anxious to be reassured that it will be of a fairly long duration. Their one fear is that Britain and America might soon lose interest in the matter and withdraw, leaving Germany open to the Russians and "disorder." Their one desire is for order. Beyond that, as far as they are concerned, the government of Germany can be had for the asking. When asked what kind of government they visualise, their reply is that the Allies will provide the government, and it is up to them to tell them what to do and how to do it. Reconstruction of their homes, resumption of trade and industry, rebuilding of a normal peaceful life? Yes, of course, that is what we want and we shall do it, but you (the Allies) will have to make the plans and issue the orders.

It is this absence of any feeling for individual or communal initiative and responsibility which is the most startling and depressing symptom. There exists among these young men, who should be looking forward to a life full of activity, no civic sense at all. They have no constructive conceptions of their own and profess, to all intents and purposes, a complete bankruptcy of political ideas. For twelve short years of Nazi rule this is a shattering result. Somehow vaguely in all this there exists an idea that a "strong man"—not Hitler, but someone of his stature and capacities—will have to emerge to pull things together and an uncertain belief that such a strong man will turn up.

Beyond that, the main preoccupation of all these men is Russia and the part she is going to play in post-war Germany. There is, curiously enough in view of the Party indoctrination which pervades, in indirect form, even the outlook of many confirmed anti-Nazis, a fair proportion of men who have no particular fear of Russia; Austrians especially seem to feel that they will get on well with the Soviet Union. All Austrians, incidentally, without exception, agree that Austria must regain its independence, but very few are aware of the Teheran Declaration. They are convinced that Hitler and Nazism (and not so much "Germany") have "ruined" Austria and that it is high time for a divorce. Among the rest apprehension with regard to the policy of the Soviet Union is general and deep-seated. All are haunted by a fear of atrocities ("we know what happened in the East," and by this they mean not what they did to Russia but what Goebbels has told them Russians did to them), and in their desire to see the Russian nightmare staved off, some conceive the oddest ideas. Repeatedly one meets the idea that all the enormous mass of Allied war material, which prisoners have seen being unloaded in Normandy, is not only meant for Germany, but that "the Americans will go right through Germany and hold back the Russians." While some still repeat the Goebbels line that Britain and Russia will fall out after the war (they conceive the Anglo-Russian alliance as a short-lived expedient similar to the German-Russian treaty of 1939), the general feeling seems to be that Britain and the U.S.A. will not only fight Russia after they have beaten Germany, but that they are under a moral obligation to do so, and that Germany, after its defeat, has a right to expect this from the Western Powers.

It is a vague, confused and, in part, quite inarticulate, if not unintelligible, picture that presents itself in this way. But the fact that it is necessarily incomplete and possibly one-sided does not materially detract from its being depressing and discouraging. As for democracy the word has no meaning for them. Occasionally, chiefly among Roman Catholics, one encounters a vague belief in the capacity of the Church to play a part; even more occasionally workers' associations and the old trade unions are mentioned, but without real belief in their effectiveness or ability to contribute to "order." This desire to find again a world in which there is order (which means peace, security and the rule of law) is perhaps the strongest thing on which the Allies have to build, and it is only in these remnants of ancient loyalties to organisations and institutions, which once played so important a part in the lives of the German people, that we find any constructive or stable idea to serve as the nucleus of a future Germany. Hitler has gone a long way to producing "nihilism" among the German people. The majority will be almost embarrassingly docile and willing to be instructed and ruled after the war. The Nazis bet on the Allies making mistakes which will gradually force this disillusioned and apathetic mass once again to trust a Führer or a dynamic party. This is a real danger unless the Allies can together present Europe, including Germany, with a constructive idea for the integration of the Continent. Hitler's New Order was terrible, but seen in retrospect any order seems better than anarchy. In the reconstruction of Europe as a going concern, young Germans, after accepting their defeat, may find a new and useful outlet for their almost infinite capacity for work and obedience.

THE LAST CHANCE

The war is obviously near its end. Perhaps within another year we shall have already succeeded or failed in our second attempt to make peace into genuine all-round progress.

In human terms, which are the only terms that matter, the question we have urgently to ask is: What guarantee can we now give to Tom Snooks, back from the wars, and to his family, of better and more secure prospects this time?

Planning for peace has become so pressing that the time has arrived to recognise frankly something very like a state of emergency. This is proved by the many problems of life and work, of food, clothing, shelter and opportunity, that demobilisation will inevitably bring up in a few months' time; and, more particularly, by the acute housing crisis that now threatens to appear in many districts when the first rush home starts. Now, in September 1944, with the Battle of France won, and the Battle of Germany begun, we need not only policies, but performance as well.

The answer to the question "Are we ready?" is both Yes and No—with the emphasis, perhaps in the most crucial matters, still on the latter. There have been very great gains in the past twelve months—three in particular: the pledging of the Government to a programme of "Food, Homes and Work"; the announcement of an Employment Policy, in which the Government accepts responsibility for maintaining the number of jobs; and, of course, the Education Act. In addition there has been a great mass of hard and expert work by officials and politicians on town and country planning, on the organisation of a national health service and on all the various complicated aspects of a comprehensive social insurance scheme. Moreover, in discussions with other countries on international monetary problems, the attempt has been made, by the proposal for an International Monetary Fund and International Investment Bank, to put into place one piece of a world economic framework in which it is hoped it may be possible for this country to be secure and prosperous.

But time is short, and this is Work in Progress, not plans laid. There have been White Papers (that is, draft and incomplete proposals) on a Health Service, Employment, Land-Use and the International Monetary (Bretton Woods) Agreements; another is ready on Social Insurance (with a separate one on Workmen's Compensation). *But there has only been one Act*—Mr. Butler's Education Act. True, there have been two very important Bills, one for temporary housing and the other for reconstruction in bombed areas, but both of these have been held up because the Government's proposals are unsatisfactory or incomplete; and, largely because of the impending housing crisis, the operation of the Education Act itself has had to be postponed until 1946, for lack of buildings as well as teachers.

Thus, the record of actual achievement, as distinct from promises and preparation, is so far almost negligible; and this is the eleventh hour. Some of the most crucial factors in determining both the size and the distribution of the post-war national cake are still undealt with; the White Paper on Employment, for instance, mentioned "appropriate steps" against monopoly, but no steps have been devised; several Government statements, written and spoken, have emphasised the importance of industrial efficiency and high productivity, but no "Policy for Wealth" has been propounded. Moreover, even in the case of the matters dealt with, many central problems have not yet been solved, for all the patient effort applied to them. Obvious examples are the crucial question of compensation in land-planning which the Government proposes to put off for another five years; and the proper distribution of administrative tasks and financial costs between central and local agencies, which remains an obstinate barrier to advance in the case of physical reconstruction, the institution of a National Health Service and effective town and country planning (including housing) even in the short run.

It may be said that this list of Work Unfinished does less than justice to the amount of Work in Progress; and it would certainly be unfair not to pay tribute to the industriousness of Ministers and Civil Servants since the programme of "Food, Work and Homes" was propounded. But, unfortunately, the test will be results, not intentions. Peace and demobilisation wait for no White Paper, Bill or Act. Indeed, it is not even sufficient to say that these or those plans could not have been laid, or these or those problems solved in the time. The sole point is that if they are not made or solved when the need for them arises, the opportunity will pass; the second chance will have been missed. This is one point where War and Peace are alike. This may be hard, but it is History.

I am therefore more than a little alarmed, as I look forward to the Peace that we now see is coming soon. I put myself in the position of Tom Snooks, and I ask myself what the prospects are for my home-coming. "It won't be long now." Will there be a house for me in the old place, and furniture and the rest, where I can gather my scattered family together again? No one knows *yet*. The Government and Parliament can't decide about "Portals" *yet*. Local authorities can't choose sites and lay down services *yet*.

How will I be demobilised anyhow? No one knows *yet*—although the Army and other Services surely need at least six months' notice to get *any* demobilisation scheme going. Who will stay in, and who will come out, and when? No one knows *yet*. What factories will carry on with War work for the Far East, and which will be released for peace production? No one knows *yet*.

Will there be a steady job for Tom Snooks? At first, of course, there will be work for all, just as there was last time. And, for that period, the Government has a careful employment policy ready, with controls, priorities, measures to stabilise the cost of living, and so on. But afterwards? There is the promise in the White Paper to accept responsibility for employment, that is, for keeping up investment, both public and private, and for keeping up expenditure on consumption, too, when unemployment rises. But how? That is the question. The White Paper is a tremendous step forward; but, after the transitional period, it is only a sketch-plan. It is aimed, too, more at preventing periodic mass *un*employment than at maintaining continuous high employment.

Will there be security for Tom Snooks' family, if he or they fall sick, etc.? No one knows *yet*. But there are hopes that the "Beveridge" White Paper will—nearly two years after the publication of the Beveridge Plan—go three-quarters of the way or more to the Prevention of Want that Sir William proposed.

I am alarmed because so much is still uncertain and unfinished; reconstruction is still a mass loose ends. But I do not despair. Time is sho and the race will be "a damned close-run affair, as Wellington said of Waterloo. But we are st in the race. We know where we want to finish Full Employment; a National Minimum; Soc (including Medical) Security; Equal Oppo tunity; Economic Efficiency. The progress mad so far is in the right direction. If it is possible no for a last, final, determined spurt to be made, th race against time—against the outbreak of Pea —may be won. There may be homes for th Snookses—work, security and opportuni welfare and as much wealth as national resour and resources can produce to be shared amo them. It is quite feasible that the right mixtu of State-planning and individual independen and initiative—and the right policies—ca after all, be decided and agreed upon by th Coalition Government in time to secure th proper, balanced and enterprising future for ou democratic and industrial society.

It is possible, but not probable. That is th position. The uncertain factor is the psychologic one. Are Ministers and Civil Servants—an business men and workers—resolutely lookin forward this time, not backwards? Are they determined to provide Tom Snooks with the hom and the work and the chances and the standard o living that he wants, even if to do so in post-wa conditions requires new ways of manufacturing of trading and of organising industry? Did ou spokesmen go to Bretton Woods determined to get results in terms of goods and services, o merely to reinstate the old financial machinery that once worked well?

Last time the mood and the attitude and th approach were wrong. The scramble to reinsta old methods meant that ends were sacrificed to means, with disastrous results; the return to gold standard at the old parity in 1925 is a plain example. The attempt to bolster up the old staple industries at their old size did vastly more harm than good to those industries themselves—to coal and to cotton, and the rest.

Last time we failed to adjust ourselves and our way of doing things to new conditions. We tried, and failed, to protect an *ancien régime* that had gone. There are signs that some of our industrialists and traders would like to do the same again. But it cannot be. The aims are set. The Government has accepted them—in the main: Full Employment; the National Minimum; Economic Efficiency. Whether we shall achieve them or not—with only the tiny space of time that remains for us to set our course effectively, the few months before Tom Snooks comes back to claim his own—depends on the pace of our progress *now*. It depends on the courage and the resolution and the faith with which, in this brief period, our politicians, our administrators, our business men and our trade unionists face this opportunity—perhaps the nation's Last Chance of the greatness that the efforts of Tom Snooks have earned for it twice in a generation.

Preparation is not enough: what Tom Snooks looks for—and requires—is Preparedness.

NATHAN OF CHURT

THE MEN OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

Why did de Gaulle replace Fernand Grenier, resistance leader and Communist deputy for St. Denis, by Charles Tillon, Resistance leader and Communist deputy for Aubervilliers? Or was it the Communist Party which determined the change? The case of Grenier, the superseded Minister of Air, illustrates one of the latent tensions in the Government, now engaged in delivering the Fourth Republic.

Already in Algiers, de Gaulle recognised that there could be no *Rassemblement National* without the Communists, whose brave and influential part in resistance had won them tens of thousands of new adherents. Their delegates, including Grenier, were members of the Provisional Consultative Assembly, where they didn't hesitate to criticise the Committee. De Gaulle wanted to appoint Grenier to his committee. But the Party refused; they wanted to appoint their own nominee. The *impasse* lasted till April 1st, when a compromise was reached by which de Gaulle appointed as commissioners the men whom the Communist Party chose as its representatives. Billoux became a Commissioner of State, and Grenier, conceded at last by the Party, was given the post of Commissioner of Air. On April 3rd the North African Communist Party published a declaration saying that "On the basis of the declarations made by Billoux and Grenier . . . (the Party) gives these two comrades a *mandate* to take part in the Committee of National Liberation."

When the reconstruction of the Committee took place, the Communists were as eager to enter it as de Gaulle was to have their support. For de Gaulle it meant a strengthening of his claim that the Committee was the *image exacte de la France.* For the Communists it meant that they took a direct part in the Government which would have the prestige of sharing in France's liberation. Those common objects, liberation and the restoration of sovereignty, bound together men as remote from each other as the extreme Right Wing, Emmanuel d'Astier, Commissioner for the Interior, Paul Giaccobi, Minister of Food, Radical, but before he joined the Committee a fierce anti-Communist, Pleven, Commissioner for the Colonies, a Christian Democrat and a business man, and Grenier. The stage of liberation is over; the stage of reconstruction has begun; and the balance of power in the Government has changed.

Grenier's removal doesn't mean that he was inefficient in his job; on the contrary, he was one of the most energetic Commissioners in Algiers; nor does it mean that the Communists are losing influence. It means that the Party mandate, withdrawn from Grenier, has been handed instead to another Party member, Tillon, chief of the *Francs Tireurs Partisans.* As head of the Government, de Gaulle has the theoretical prerogative of choosing his Cabinet. As leaders of what is probably the best organised political party in France, the Central Committee of the Communist Party have made their own choice, and stated it with the emphasis which a million supporters in Paris and among the Maquisards allow them. They now claim that their representation in the Government is insufficient.

Lopped off from the Government are the men whom the Communists didn't like and whom de Gaulle found it unprofitable to use, despite their personal talents. Henri Queuille, a Radical Socialist and almost a professional Minister—he has been in twenty-three governments—has given way, as a venerable figure-head, to a more venerable figure-head, Jules Jeanneney, the 80-year-old President of the Senate.

André Philip, whose Christian Socialism made him more popular in London and New York than in Algiers, loses the job of "co-ordinating" the Committee and the Assembly. Perhaps de Gaulle might have found another post in which he could have used Philip's exceptional capabilities as an orator and a jurist, were it not for the personal hostility directed at him from the Left, which didn't like his brand of Socialism, and the Right, which didn't like his brand of Christianity.

Le Troquer's dismissal was foreshadowed when he was transferred, with de Gaulle's apologies, from the Commissariat for War to be Commissioner for the Liberated Regions. In Algiers this seemed like an application for the Chiltern Hundreds or elevation to the Lords. Le Troquer, a Socialist deputy who defended Léon Blum at Riom, was another whipping boy for the Communists and the Giraudists. The Communists said that Le Troquer didn't purge enough; the Right Wing said that he purged too much. The Commissioner himself told me that he would be glad when the purging was over. Perhaps this distaste for *l'épuration* has disqualified him from the Ministry for the Liberated Regions.

The exit of Bonnet will be welcomed by all those who deplored the inefficiency of the Commissariat of Information in Algiers. Not only was it inept in its propaganda; it helped also to frame the elaborate press decrees which, other than those providing for the closing down of Vichy journals, seem likely to be ignored in France. The *Ordonnance* concerning a single Press Agency, an authoritarian, Goebbels-like abortion, was inconspicuously strangled shortly after its birth by Tietgen, the new Minister of Information. Though the voice was the voice of Bonnet, these *Ordonnances* had the touch of de Gaulle; it is a good sign that the mouthpiece has been rejected.

D'Astier, Resistance delegate, ex-Minister of the Interior? His removal suggests that, within the Resistance movement, now that liberation is a fact, political differences are again re-asserting themselves—wisely, since, although a State can be freed by all Parties sinking their political differences, it is only by assertion of their policy that men can build a better society. D'Astier, politically, has always been considered a man of the Right. He will need to serve a new political apprenticeship before his great merits in the Resistance Movement can be decisive in giving him a Ministerial post. With him goes Massigli, Minister for Foreign Affairs, professional diplomatist, who was, till 1940, French Ambassador at Ankara.

In Massigli's shoes, Bidault, President of the National Resistance Committee, is the most significant new-comer in the Government. In Algiers, Massigli was always considered to have, together with Pleven, the most conservative Commissariat in the Committee. The Communists pressed persistently for an overhaul of France's diplomatic representation abroad. The Foreign Office in the Fromentin was said to be staffed with technically-able Vichyites and indolents of the Third Republic, who had drifted to Algiers from the Quai d'Orsay. In the "dynamic" period of French diplomacy in May and June, it was de Gaulle, rather than Massigli, who expressed the Committee's Foreign Policy. With Georges Bidault, history professor, as Foreign Minister, we can expect that de Gaulle's "dynamism" will receive other sources of generation than in the office of M. Gaston Palewski, his Chef de Cabinet. The Resistance Movement has demonstrated its claim to speak in foreign as well as in domestic affairs.

What of the men of Algiers who remain? De Gaulle has kept his Gaullists and his *hommes de confiance* as the core of his Cabinet. René Capitant, former head of the Gaullist Resistance body "Combat," remains at the Ministry of Education. Pleven, an elegant Anglophile who has lived many years in England and thinks "the British Colonial Service is wonderful," remains at the Ministry of Colonies, where, no doubt, he will succeed in his ambition to put the French Colonies into a Savile Row suit. An important promotion is that of Mendès-France, the young Radical Socialist, to be Minister of National Economy. Mendès-France has an unblemished record of resistance and achievement. Arrested in Morocco when he landed from the "Massilia" in 1940, he was imprisoned by Vichy, escaped, joined a Free French bomber squadron, was decorated, and became Commissioner for Finance in Algiers. He is a loyal Gaullist and an unassailed resistant. De Menthon, Minister of Justice and formerly President of the Catholic Youth Association and Jacquinot, Minister for the Navy who, once belonged to Flandin's Alliance Démocratique are two of de Gaulle's devoted supporters.

Looking at the new Government with its official classification of Leaders of Resistance, Members of the old Parliament and *Résistants dès la Première Heure,* one might think that its members have grown in stature and that the stature of de Gaulle has become more life size. The new men, Parodi, Minister of Labour; Laurent, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs; Tillon, Minister of Air, and Bidault, Foreign Minister, obtained their eminence not in the narrow provincial atmosphere of Algiers but in the broad air of France. They tower above the marsh of mediocrity which in North Africa, *faute de mieux,* represented the French people.

Will de Gaulle, no longer a Gulliver in Lilliput, be able to lead his equals towards France's new glory? I believe that he is big enough to try.

MAURICE EDELMAN

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A LONDON DIARY

THERE ought not to be a stack of perambulators at Paddington, nor long queues waiting for taxis at the main stations. Of course, the evacuees have been told that there is still a real danger of V.2, that country air is better for children's health, and that with so many houses damaged in London, it is silly to come back sooner than necessary. But then how much has been said that would in fact encourage people to return to London! The fascinating account of the defeat of the flying bomb, which Mr. Duncan Sandys gave last week, left people with the impression that the battle of London was over. And then the decision to relax the black-out served to confirm the more optimistic forecasts. Black-out is a symbol. "Lights up" to most people means that the war is over. From the purely military point of view, the black-out could have been lifted some time ago. It has been kept, I take it, partly because, without the black-out, people would wander about the streets instead of being near to their homes and shelters at night, and would be caught in the streets by any kind of surprise raid, and partly because there was a danger that people would think that lights-up was a signal for slacking off. I cannot blame the Ministry of Home Security for allowing us more light, but it should have been much more frank and forthright about V-weapons, instead of placing the emphasis on the discomforts of unrepaired houses. As to black-out, it might have been wiser to increase street lighting, without naming a day that would symbolise victory for so many people.

* * *

Mr. Duncan Sandys' account of the flying bomb gave our propagandists to the Continent a superb opportunity of further discrediting Hitler's Intuition. The defeat of the flying bomb is a terrific story of R.A.F. courage and scientific ingenuity. If Hitler intended, as I suppose he did, to reduce Britain to a state of jitters and perhaps to persuade us to choose the Pas de Calais as the place of invasion, the whole idea was clearly a miserable failure. It is wrong, however, to say, as many journalists have done, that the flying bomb was not a military weapon at all, and quite unjustified by its effect on the war. After all, a large number of airmen lost their lives in bombing robot sites, and prodigious quantities of explosives that would otherwise have fallen on German factories and communications were dropped on the French coast. This is a quite considerable diversion of military effort. In point of fact the flying bomb is a most unpleasantly significant weapon. It means that at the end of this war we shall all know that the technical problem of bombarding far distant capitals, without any risk to the lives of airmen, has been solved, just as we knew at the end of the last war that in the event of another civilians would be bombed. This knowledge dominated policy between 1919 and 1939. Unless we can control armaments by an international organisation and police system, we have only another fear-laden truce before us.

* * *

One of the most important changes in the world is the popular discovery that "what is physically possible is financially possible." The phrase was coined by Stuart Chase, the American economist, but the idea has been driven into the heads of people everywhere by the deliberate decision of the Russians to turn a primitive into a highly developed industrial country in the short space of ten years, and by the war in which we spend in a month of destruction enough money to satisfy all social aspirations for a year. Stuart Chase made the remark referring to the Bombay Plan, as the Bombay industrialists' scheme for developing India is now commonly called. Coming from him, the remark is significant because he is producing a series of studies of social and economic problems for the Twentieth Century Fund, and basing one of them called

"Goals for America," on the same idea—that the "big five" essentials of adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care and education can be now provided for every human being. "A century ago eighty Americans out of a hundred got their living from the land, as most Indians do to-day. Now less than twenty-five Americans out of a hundred work on the land, but, aided by tractors, combines, milking machines and by Tennessee Valley Authority projects, they produce relatively far more than when 80 per cent. were employed in agriculture. India's primary task is to shift from over-agriculturalised economy to balanced industry-farming economy."

* * *

Mr. Murphy is appointed as the American opposite number to Mr. Kirkpatrick in Germany. People here will chiefly remember him in connection with the Darlan episode, and the period when the State Department backed Vichy. Mr. Murphy, like Mr. Kirkpatrick, is a Catholic, and that accounts, I think, for the fact that they favour policies which, in the long run, these Protestant Democracies will not accept. A friend, who has worked closely with Mr. Kirkpatrick tells me that, in his view, I was right in saying he is in politics extremely reactionary, but not in calling him "cynical." "He seems cynical," he said to me, "because he doesn't really think that most of the political decisions we make actually matter very much. As a Catholic, he is thinking in terms of a thousand years or so, and regards the troubles of present politics as trivial."

* * *

No one who has ever watched Lord Cecil in action will suffer from the common delusion that he is some sort of dreamy Utopian. In fact he is an intensely practical person; occasionally, on a Committee, the ferocity of the K.C. is even more obvious than the superb courtesy of the aristocrat. I suppose the "dreamy" reputation comes from Cecil's advocacy of the League which Conservatives for the last twenty-five years have tried to represent as some impossible form of pacifism. Such people write continuously in the *Daily Telegraph* about the Peace Ballot and the League of Nations Union as if they were foolish attempts to keep peace by looking pleasant. The grim joke is that before the war the League was the effort of tough and realistic people to stop war by the use of superior armaments. Britain and France alone were far stronger than Germany up to 1936, while the Conservatives who sabotaged the League were sloppy enough to think that Hitler and Mussolini would be kept from attacking our interests by smiles and coaxing and offers of other people's territory. Mr. Churchill's letter on the occasion of Lord Cecil's eightieth birthday will be a nasty knock to such impractical critics of collective security. The Premier is quite explicit about force and the League—even if there is rather more irony than he perhaps realised in his characteristic sentence: "The great causes of international peace and justice for which you have so faithfully pleaded are now being triumphantly vindicated by the sword."

* * *

Stories that war-time fashions in Paris had been kept ugly in order to spite the Germans and that French production had been kept inefficient to defeat them were obviously baloney. I now hear from Paris that in the shops of the most famous stylists the rich could buy model frocks without coupons, and that for the top-drawer families, life during the occupation has gone on almost exactly as usual. One correspondent who has been dining in these circles says that the rich complain bitterly of the rise in prices.

John Pudney, who was among the early arrivals in Paris, tells excellent stories of a very different side of Paris life, in which shooting and champagne get all mixed up. In this week's NEW STATESMAN AND NATION he tells the story of his visit to Picasso. I hope that next week he will produce more extracts from his Paris diary.

CRITIC

DON'T LET'S BE BEASTLY TO AMERICA

If America seems lately
To be burning for a row,
It doesn't matter greatly,
For she's not herself just now.
Her condition is affecting,
For she's just come over queer—
Yes, America's expecting,
And her time is drawing near.

If she sees her spangled banner
Waving everywhere alone,
We must keep our bedside manner
And refuse to flaunt our own.
If she feels pre-natal craving
For the fruits of all the earth
We must still indulge her raving,
Till America gives birth.

If she seems perverse and fretful,
To the British Commonwealth
We must never be forgetful
Of her present state of health;
Like the eagle when she's broody,
Like the lioness with whelp,
If America is moody
It's a thing she cannot help.

If she wants to start the rumour
That the British never fought,
We must cherish her, and humour,
For we know she is distraught;
We must still contrive to love her
While she bares her claws and fangs;
For these demonstrations cover
Her preliminary pangs.

We must not attempt to change her,
Nor her indignation rouse,
Till the Dewey little stranger
Has arrived at the White House,
Or till Roosevelt on election
Celebrates victorious morn—
She'll return our tried affection
Once a President is born.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to F. G. Dyer.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Whether Bilston returns the National Government candidate or not might make a difference of several days in the duration of the war, claimed Lieutenant-Colonel Gibbons, the National Government candidate, at Sedgley last night.—*Wolverhampton "Express and Star."*

Many thanks to Almighty God for lost pouch.—Advt. in *Manchester Evening News.*

To my astonishment I find I am going to have a baby. I am just 18, and my boy friend and I have never done anything but kiss and hold hands. Can you tell me how it happened?—*Woman's Own.*

The famous weather expert, Father J. P. Rowland, director of Stonyhurst College Observatory . . . said yesterday that he got letters of abuse from anonymous correspondents who blamed him for bad weather and said it was all due to interfering with the clocks.—*News Chronicle.*

This is what I have to say about us old people, and as I am in my 80th year, you will agree that I know a little about what I am writing:

When victory is proclaimed I shall have the pleasure of knowing that it is the old people who have won this struggle. They alone produced the lads and lassies who have saved this country.—Letter in *Picture Post.*

PICASSO—A GLIMPSE IN SUNLIGHT

WHEN the firing died down and one wept less often at the singing of the Marseillaise and less champagne was forced across one's altogether willing palate in the name of liberation, I went to see Pablo Picasso. He was just walking down to the door of the block of flats where he lives overlooking the Seine. He was accompanied by a large, graceful, closely-shaved, grey dog: and he was on the point of taking his first more or less peaceful walk along the Seine to his studio off the Boulevard St. Michel.

His hand was warm: his greeting was quick; the great dark eyes were as vivid as ever. Five years of war has not cast any physical shadow upon the prophet-painter of the picture *Guernica.* "It will be more amusing," he said, "if we talk in my studio—and you can see what I have been up to . . ."

It seemed funny driving through Paris in a car with Picasso in the other seat. It seemed funny that the journey begun weeks ago in Bayeux and continued through so many battlefields should end upon the left bank with this eager little man pointing out the damage caused in the quarter by the last desperate Germans to fight in Paris. Picasso enjoyed the car ride; not many people were riding round in cars. Between sight-seeing we discussed one or two mutual friends and such pictures as I had seen in New York and London since the war. Then we climbed the circular shambling wooden stairs toward the great studio which Picasso occupied already for years before the war in the loft of an old palace.

There was a hall littered with books. Then came a large room, "a little of a factory and something of a studio." Picasso pointed with his foot lightly toward a Matisse, then with his hand to another Matisse half hidden among bronzes and *objets d'art*—to use a rare but strictly accurate phrase. There were other pictures belonging to my host, a superb Douanier Rousseau for example. There were no works by Picasso.

But at last we began to talk about the closed years: and Picasso's fine hands with the long regular finger-nails smiled with his eyes. He turned from the works of other men and beckoned me to follow him up one more staircase. "I have worked on," he said. "They would not let me exhibit but I worked and all my work is here." We came into a working studio perched amid the Montparnasse roofs, so recently—and still occasionally—battlegrounds for snipers. This studio was packed with the four years' work of Picasso.

I forget how it was ranged, how one looked at it. There was no order, just a sufficient orderliness. During all the closed years Picasso has never ceased to work in this studio. As the horror once seen at Guernica extended over the face of the earth, Picasso has worked with undiminished zeal. He believes that outside events caused him to seek a greater objectivity. He said that the tendency in the creative artist is to stabilise mankind on the verge of chaos. These are the sort of things we talked about, not using many words, but referring from time to time to the collection of pictures not yet enjoyed by the critics of a free world. There was a series of brilliantly coloured and comparatively objective paintings of the Seine round the Ile St. Louis—nearly the most hackneyed landscape in Paris. There were four very exact likenesses of a boy drawn during this summer of war. There were a number of drawings of the pot of growing tomatoes which stood in the window, and at least two finished paintings clung round those same tomatoes as a central theme. "A more disciplined art, less unconstrained freedom, in a time like this is the artist's defence and guard," Picasso said. "Very likely for the poet it is a time to write sonnets. Most certainly it is not a time for the creative man to fail, to shrink, to stop working. Think of the great poets and painters of the Middle Ages."

We looked at larger canvasses, at painting ghter, gayer but as strong and free as the pre-ar works I had known. Not being competent o write of painting I have no words either in rench or in English with which to praise or to amine such things. Picasso showed me the ore recent, and he pointed out the significance f the dates. There stood the big picture finished n August 19 when the fighting started. There ere sketches dated day by day during the battle f Paris. On August 24 when Tiger tanks were ghting round the corner in the Boul Mich, when ermans and French Fascists were fortified in he Luxembourg, when the Prefecture just across he river on the Ile de la Cité was a strong point, icasso glanced at a work by Poussin. As he windows rattled with the fighting he began opying Poussin's design. "It was an exercise, self discipline, a healthy fascination . . ." He orked at it throughout the loud, angry day of he liberation on August 25.

Now the sun shines in upon the much-painted omato plant and Paris is quiet. Cocteau is on he telephone. One must see the rest of the studio partment, the cool Spanish tiled floor of the edroom, the bathroom with twin wash-hand asins, "either a hand in each or an intelligent onversation with a friend while you wash." he little man is vivid, simple, twenty years ounger in vitality than the disciples who move bout these roomy quarters to do honour to the ork and admire the master.

In the littered hall again, Picasso displayed the avage literature of the enemy. He has quietly ollected the Nazi and collaborationist periodicals n which his work has been attacked. His quick emarkable hands turned over the pages which eproduced his work. *Picasso the Jew . . . the ecadent Pablo Picasso . . . the obscene pornorapher* . . . went the captions. "And now, t least, that is at an end," he said, simply allowing or one moment that relief which all intellectual aris is expressing to show itself in his own ace.

Before I left I enquired if there was anything icasso needed immediately, besides the cigarettes hich I had brought. His only request was odest enough. He showed me the worn wafer f soap which was the butt of his shaving stick. thought of that legion of would-be painters hose beards testified to their aspirations : and thought of the master with the thousands of ounds worth of painting upstairs who required nly the means to shave. It was one of the war's ess worthy paradoxes : but it amused both of us, tanding there at the threshold of sunny, free Paris.

JOHN PUDNEY

PEER GYNT

THE performance of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* at the New Theatre by the Old Vic Company was a remarkable one, and incomparably superior to the performance at the Old Vic itself in 1922. It will be repeated in their enterprising repertory.

There was no mistaking its effect on the audience : they were enthralled. The part of Peer is one of the most exacting in all drama. It demands from the actor both simplicity and sly subtlety ; he must possess temperament force, physical agility, not a little humour and in some passages he must be capable of poetic passion. He must be in turn a brutal young peasant and wild, gay, romancing boy, a cowardly sneak, a recklessly daring egotist, a tender lover, a comic sensualist, a greedy swindling millionaire, and an old battered philosopher overwhelmed by a sense of his utter futility. I am therefore paying Mr. Ralph Richardson a great tribute when I say that he filled the part. Yes, he played it even better than I could imagine its being played in the theatre I carry under my own hat. I was glad to see that the press recognised his achievement ; that is to say so far as that wretched inch or two permits, which is all the editors of daily papers allow to the theatre, thus perforce reducing dramatic criticism to mere reporting. (Editors do not seem to be aware that intelligent interest is taken in the stage to-day, apart from gossip about actors and actresses.)

Then, there is the magnificent part of Aase, Peer Gynt's old mother, who is the most complete embodiment of maternal instincts in dramatic literature. She was magnificently impersonated by Dame Sybil Thorndike. In the famous scene when the outlaw Peer comes down from the mountains to find his deserted mother dying in the bed in which he used to sleep as a boy, she achieved a pathetic dignity, terribly natural, utterly unsentimental, which will stay with me like a memory from real life. How well, too, they play together. Watch Peer as he enters unsuspectingly : the incredulous relief and joy on the old woman's face ; the stolid look of egotistic dismay on his round peasant countenance when he discovers that instead of receiving comfort he must bestow it. Note how his face clears as he falls into his usual way of dealing with anything painful : All right—then let's pretend. So her bed becomes a sleigh ; her rocking-chair a team of fine horses. Gee up ! Gee up ! Off they go together, bound for the golden gates of heaven. And though dying, Aase revels as she has always done, even against her will, in her Peer's preposterous make-believe, which has been the delight and ruin of her life ; in her wonderful boy whom she has scolded and whipped and defended against all the world. Watch how she clings to him now. While he is adding a touch or two to the picture of surly St. Peter's discomfiture, she suddenly sinks back dead. He is taken aback. Then comes a moment of tenderness which Mr. Richardson interprets with admirable restraint. Peer for an instant knows he has lost his only champion. "Thank you mother for all your thrashings—and all your kisses." Well, it can't be helped. He is off on his career of wild unreality, leaving us (how beautiful and stern Aase looks !) gazing at the indecipherable face of death. It is a wonderful scene, wonderfully well interpreted.

When next we see Peer, he will be a cynical spruce financier, entertaining sumptuously, his gold-laden yacht in the offing, four obsequious and greedy friends on the coast of the African desert. The audience thoroughly entered into the devastating fun of the scenes which follow each other, inevitably too rapidly in this compressed stage-version. They enjoyed the irony of Peer's soliloquies in which he displayed a confidence, characteristic of all prodigious egotists from Napoleon and Hitler downwards, that he is the special pet of Providence. For a while, events seem to justify thoroughly that view, though he is somewhat dashed, after finding himself accepted as a prophet, at discovering next that he has been chosen Emperor of a lunatic asylum where every inmate believes only in himself. (By the way I am not sure that Mr. Harcourt Williams should not have suggested a little more clearly that Dr. Begriffenfeldt ought to have been one of his own patients.) At last he is washed up, a broken bit of flotsam, on the Norwegian coast, only one feeling alive in him. What am I ? What was the meaning of my life ? Mr. Richardson delivered Peer's famous speech as he peels the onions to find it has no core ("Nature is witty") perfectly. In the whole of his performance I have only two faults to find, and one was due to the production. He does not make Peer's own epitaph on himself tell enough, when he was expecting to die like an animal. "Here lies one who never was alive." In the scene when Peer stumbles about among the trees, we do not hear what they say, nor the other things which speak. It is interpreted operatically and the all important words, "We are the thoughts you never thought ; We are the tears you never shed, etc., etc." are lost. Consequently Peer himself seems ineffective and merely doddering. English singers never close their mouths, and therefore never sound their consonants. The scene fails, yet it should be one of the movingly disquieting ones.

Here let me say a word about this admirable production as a whole. Shortening was, of course, inevitable. Grieg's music is an immense help and, with the exception of the forest scene, is most skillfully used. The most serious dramatic loss of the cuts was the omission in Act I of the scene between Peer and Ingrid (the bride he has Young—Lochinvared). There he displays a callous brutality which prepares us for his transformation from an absurd amiable dreamer into an unscrupulous egotist. I noted that *The Spectator's* excellent dramatic critic was inclined to think that Peer was not a unified character. If the Ingrid scene had survived, he might not have done so.

One of the most ticklish points in producing *Peer Gynt* is to prevent the close suggesting a sentimental Darby and Joan ending when Peer lays at last his head on Solveig's breast. Mr. Tyrone Guthrie certainly avoided that, but I could myself have wished that the final impression left had not been one of more definite doubt, whether Peer would escape being melted down as dross by the Button Moulder (played with impressive dignity by Laurence Olivier.) I suspect that Ibsen meant Peer to die on Solveig's breast, at the moment that awful symbol of what is inexorable in the nature of things, the Button Moulder utters the ominous words : "At the last cross-roads we will be met, and *then* we'll see whether . . ." If so, they should *interrupt* Solveig's song, though she sings one stave more. In the production she went on singing long after the Button Moulder had pronounced that ominous threat.

Several theatrical commentators have regretted that they could not make out what the whole play was about. Well, it has been accessible in translation for fifty years and often expounded. On sale, too, in the theatre was a brief pamphlet summing up what has been said about its general drift. But none need read that in order at any rate to *feel* the idea which permeates this great play, even if they cannot formulate it clearly to themselves. It is a difficult play in many ways. Ibsen uses symbols which it is often best not to interpret too strictly : he is a poet as well as a thinker. But I have always thought that Peer in his discussion with the Button Moulder makes a point Ibsen fails to answer. When he asks how he could have guessed what sort of a man he was intended to be ? All the inexorable Thing can reply is that it was his first business in life to have divined it. Now, it may be that if we listened very attentively and constantly to the voice of God, we might ourselves obtain light on this problem in our own lives. But I must say I think there was some excuse for Peer, judging from my own case. To me the Voice never spoke clearly. I know, of course, that I ought to have been a far better man if I were to escape being a well-meaning nonentity proper to be scrapped ; but what purpose I was intended to fulfil, honestly, about that I never received any clear indication. Did Ibsen then believe we all do ?

I long to pick out for praise many other passages in this remarkable production. I will only mention in conclusion, the Mysterious Passenger—please look out for his terrifying calm and the slow gesture of his white hand ; Mr. Nicholas Hannen's gruesome, gay revolting impersonation of the pot-bellied Troll-King ; Miss Leighton's unpleasant alluringness as his daughter, and Miss Joyce Redman's Solveig, especially when Solveig is all childish trust and innocence. In that part Ibsen set the actress a task requiring two personalities. At the play's end Solveig has to become a Mother—not after the earthly manner of a grand, distraught old Aase —but one in whose unquestioning capacity for forgiveness even wretched scamps find rest, find perhaps at last themselves.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

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PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Arms and the Man," at the New Theatre

Since the first publication of this play its theme or moral has been hammered home by two considerable wars. No, fighting is not, in the main, romantic; and the first business of the general, as of the *hôtelier*, is to make sure of the commissariat. But if the paradoxes of 1898 have become the platitudes of 1944, the play remains what its author called it, "pleasant"—and remarkably so. Not only is the dialogue fresh and sharp, but the situations evolve with a most professional sureness. For all his talk of Sardoodledom, one may suspect the young Mr. Shaw of having studied Sardou as well as Scribe and Labiche. The Old Vic production is enjoyably rapid. Mr. Ralph Richardson and Dame Sybil Thorndike are exactly right—the parts could not be better acted and cast. (The pity is that Dame Sybil does not more often play in comedy, which is her *forte.*) Mr. Olivier, wonderfully made up, wrecks an otherwise brilliant performance by allowing his natural humour to twinkle through a character who must have none. Similarly, the producer has encouraged or allowed Miss Margaret Leighton to guy many of her lines and to wear incongruously elaborate frocks. (How hackneyed are such caricatures of the nineteenth century!) Mr. Hannen, Miss Joyce Redman and Mr. Norris Sweden play smaller parts with all the spirit needed. Altogether a most rewarding entertainment.

"The Banbury Nose" at Wyndham's

For Mr. Peter Ustinov, a very young man, old age presents a theme endlessly fascinating. The old caricature themselves, and Mr. Ustinov is a brilliant mimic; they are funny, and pathetic, as he sees them, and too often hideously powerful. So *The Banbury Nose* starts in 1943 with the old men firmly in possession. Major-General Reginald Hume-Banbury (Roger Livesey) is the more active kind of Blimp, a tyrant, mixture of lion and ass. He wears an old hunting-coat, thunders at chess, and invokes his ancestors; his middle-aged son—also a general, but not a very good one—calls him "Daddy" and has to be summoned by bugle calls from the golf links where he is playing truant; the first hint that the Hume-Banbury line of noses and military decorations may be at an end comes from the grandson, who has lost an arm in Spain, fighting for "the wrong side." Thus in Act I all the cards, of caricature and conflict, are laid on the table, and we wonder how the next three acts, going back in sequence to 1884, are to avoid repetition and anti-climax. The surprise is that liveliness is maintained. The fossils of Act I come gradually to life—in middle-age, in youth; the curtain goes down after a gay and touching scene, on the young soldier with a girl in his arms starting hopefully on life. Not only Roger Livesey as the last of the Noses, but Hugh Burden as a parson who might have been a soldier and Michael Shepley as a likeable black-sheep, achieve the art of growing backwards with skill and sympathy. Mr. Ustinov pokes fun at his characters (and there are few dramatists now that can do it better), but he has a heart too.

"To-morrow the World," at the Aldwych

This play, the American authors are at pains to point out, deals with a problem that soon will be pressing. What, if anything, can be done to civilize the twelve million German children systematically deformed by Nazi education? A little fiend from Germany arrives to live with his uncle, an American professor. Kindness and "persuasion" are applied, then he tries to murder a little girl. Is the case hopeless? No, in the end kindness cures. As a solution of a problem, the play is of little use. For each German child cannot be segregated from his fellows in so elevating an environment. Moreover, the characterisation is elementary and the dialogue undistinguished. The professor, supposed to be so intelligent, never makes an interesting remark. But the play is almost always gripping: the technique is wonderfully slick, and a whale of a part is provided for the boy. Of this David O'Brien, doubtless with much help from Mr. Marcel Varnel, the producer, takes the fullest advantage. His star performance deserves to fill the Aldwych for months. Mr. Robert Harris and Miss Elizabeth Allan, in long but colourless roles, succeed in the hard job of conveying a real goodness of heart. Miss Jean Cadell, who has a good part, of course makes the most of it, and ought to take a separate curtain at the end. Miss Lilli Kann also is uncommonly good. The child actress, Angela Glynne, is often inaudible even from the stalls. The play can be strongly recommended as remarkable entertainment, which amuses and excites the audience. And there is a profound pathos in the spectacle of a child, who has been made a devil, revealing the first symptoms of recovery.

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THE MOVIES

"Aux Armes Citoyens"

"The Return of the Vikings," at the Regal

"Wing and a Prayer," at the Odeon

The full-length film of Paris, from which last week the newsreels had snipped pictures, was shown to the press on Tuesday. *Aux Armes Citoyens* was shot by cameramen of the Maquis, it has a commentary by Pierre Blanchard, and lasts forty minutes. At some time or other, we are assured, it will, it must, be shown in an English version; but why the time-lag? The ten-minute rule for newsreels obviously works in the interests of cut-throat competition; public taste or demand has no say at all in the matter. It is rather as though on D-Day none of the newspapers had come out with more than a half-column about Invasion, the rest of their space being devoted to crime, sport and gossip, owing—it would have been pointed out—to the half-column rule. I should be all in favour, let me add, of cutting down self-styled epics by half. The generosity which allows *An American Romance* to run for 151 minutes can appeal to nobody, I imagine, except the deep sleeper.

Despite the fact that *Aux Armes Citoyens* has already been creamed by the newsreels, it makes a new and forcible impression. With more ample detail the six-day battle is seen as a crown of the struggle of all Frenchmen against their oppressors, and events themselves take on an orderly shape. It was no divine accident or staged triumph. This is a story of the people, as the Stalingrad and Leningrad stories were, slight though the struggle may be by comparison. One fact will demonstrate the nature of the fighting: the F.F.I., with no weapons other than rifles and home-made grenades, captured or destroyed 60 German tanks. Well, this remarkable film, the first considerable production of the underground cinema, is in London, and the sooner it gets into programmes the better for all of us.

The Return of the Vikings comes in time to anticipate events in Norway. The work of the Norwegian Merchant Navy—the fourth largest in the world—is shown at its true value; we follow the training of sailors and paratroops; and there are some enchanting glimpses of pre-war whaling and northern fiords. The raid by Mosquitoes on the Gestapo headquarters in Oslo has been vividly reconstructed from newsreels; and altogether this documentary is an adequate, if not enthralling, tribute to an ally.

Documentary material of a more exciting nature will be found in *Wing and a Prayer*, the story of a U.S. aircraft carrier used as bait for the Japanese navy in the Pacific. The orders, not explained till later, are to lure on the enemy and avoid action. A rather artificially strained situation—enhanced by Mr. Don Ameche as the officer who has to give the orders—thus obtains on board the carrier. But apart from this the film has a taut and genuine quality. One may forget the figure of Mr. Ameche, an angry and bedraggled Mickey Mouse on the captain's deck, for the sake of some fine photography and a not too melodramatised story.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

ARGENTINA AT THE CROSS-ROADS

SIR,—Expert as Mr. MacKenzie undoubtedly i in Argentine-Anglo-American affairs (I refer his article of July 22), I think that in explaining the reasons for the past and present crises Argentina he omits one very important angle—the psychological. It is not possible that, with his obvious knowledge of his subject, he does not know the psychological make-up of the Argentine people and the pro-Fascist tendencies of their rich classes. Since the beginning of Argentina's independence those classes have had a strong preference for governments with "a strong hand."

The biggest struggle Argentina has ever had has been with its own people, to make them proud of being the "chosen" nation which ought to possess the leadership of Latin-America. It was and is a struggle which the Argentine people have always fought and, with varying luck, won or lost, for they are indeed one of the most democratic of peoples. Their rich classes, however, outdo the same classes of other nations in their cunning in deluding the people both politically and materially—which is more amazing when one realises that Argentina has been an independent country for only about 130 years.

While Argentina has made but a small contribution to the world's culture or science, she has been clever enough to create such phrases as "Nosotros, el gran pueblo Argentino" ("We, the great people of Argentina") which have come into general use in schools, the press, official and public life. . . . Argentina's rich classes learned, quicker and better than most, how to falsify elections, how to make revolutions and how to suppress the people's rights. Unbelievable as it may seem, but nevertheless it is true, of the immigrants from all nations the Japs, Italians and, of course, the Germans have enjoyed the biggest political liberties throughout Argentina.

It may seem to many that Argentina would live on good terms with U.S.A. and Britain if certain conditions—mainly in Argentina's foreign trade—were changed in her favour. They do not see that Argentina's rich classes are already too far advanced on the road to moral acceptance of Fascism to withdraw when material conditions are changed. They do not remember—perhaps they do not know—that it was during Argentina's most happy and successful economic periods that her Anchorenas and many other rich families supported the Government's policy of friendship towards Germany, Italy and Japan for the doubtful benefit of getting military instructors from them. It was they, the Anchorenas, the Saavedras and many others who tried to make the nation feel proud of having so many admirals—without a fleet—generals, of a small and old-fashioned army, and generals of an air force which had neither planes nor pilots. They desire power, and that is why German officers—who does not know of Capt. Röhm's military "career" in Argentina?—were always welcomed and appreciated. It was they, those rich families, who kept and keep the country in the grip, not of a capitalistic régime, but the feudalism of the Middle Ages; and, aiming at increasing national pride, name streets and squares after their doubtful generals and "national heroes." It is enough to read an Argentine school history book to be amazed at the countless numbers of her heroes.

They are jealous of American, and now Brazilian, influence in South America, forgetting that they have had the same possibilities for development, both geographically and economically, possessing, like the U.S.A. and Russia, all manner of raw materials. They did not develop; they retained their old systems and went down, and paid the price of the lost economic and political leadership of South America, which they are now endeavouring to regain by intrigue and vilification of the efforts of U.S.A., Britain and Brazil.

If it is true—as we have come to realise—that the Germans, and first of all the rich classes of the Junkers—must be re-educated and controlled, surely it is equally necessary that the rich classes of Argentina, who so willingly offer hospitality to all kinds of Fascism, should be persuaded to a change of policy?

JOSE GOMEZ

INDIAN OUTLOOK

SIR,—Prof. Hill's Indian friend may be right when he says that a satisfactory settlement between India and England can be achieved without politicians, but I very much doubt it. India's 400 millions accept Gandhi and Nehru, with their demand for complete independence, as their National leaders, and not Mr. Tata and Mr. Birla.

The Bombay industrialists have already issued their plan for the economic development of India, but what chances are there of it being implemented so long as India is governed from Whitehall?

The attitude of the average British soldier now serving in India is: "For God's sake let the Indians run their own country. They could never make a bigger mess of it than we have done in the past 150 years." With the example of the Soviet Union's development of Asiatic countries and China's seven years' resistance against Japan, is there valid reason to believe that an Indian National Government could not run the country better than the British Raj?

INDIAN ARMY OFFICER

SEATS FOR THE MIGHTY

SIR,—At a time like the present, when five years' sacrifices of the lives, limbs and property of Service folk and civilians alike seem at last to be paving the way to a Victory for Democracy, the following incident may be worth recording.

Last week I had occasion to travel on duty from King's Cross to Doncaster. I arrived at King's Cross a good hour before the train was due to start; there were a lot of people on the platform. I fell in with a young subaltern who was travelling in the same direction, and we arranged to board a 1st class coach as soon as the train was shunted in to the platform. We both had 1st class railway warrants. We duly boarded the train and got ourselves two corners in a 1st class compartment. After being seated for about ten minutes a railway official entered the compartment and told us we must get out of it as it was reserved. I protested that there was no reservation label in evidence. He thereupon produced one which he stuck on the window. I told him that I was travelling on duty and my companion on leave, and that if he was turning us out it was up to him to find us similar accommodation on the train. He told me he couldn't—or wouldn't—do this, and we must just do what we could about it ourselves. There seemed no alternative, and we moved out. I went on to the platform and looked at the label. It was in the name of a well-known business man who, I believe, is a director of many companies, is or was an owner of racehorses, and is probably exceedingly wealthy.

It is nice to know that in addition to fighting Germans and Japs we have also been maintaining the static affluence, with its accompanying power, of individuals such as this, but it is a pity that the L.N.E.R. Company hadn't thought of putting on the reservation label when making up the train before it came into the platform!

SQUADRON LEADER, R.A.F.

A.F. B2626

SIR,—Much has been written on the subject of servicemen's apathy towards the vote.

Gunner J. B., in your issue of June 10th, puts the blame on A.B.C.A. Despite the lack of A.B.C.A. talks, etc., in this unit, a total of four hundred and ninety-six A.F. B2626 were completed and despatched out of five hundred supplied.

The reason for this large percentage of politically-conscious men can be traced to the "peaceful" era between the end of the North African campaign and the beginning of the Italian, when Brains Trusts, debates, discussion groups and a wall newspaper were all organised and run by a "live wire" private soldier.

Surely, then, Gunner J. B. could do the same in his unit.

L/Cpl. W. E. OSBORNE

C.M.F.

"PUBLIC" SCHOOLS

SIR,—Comment on the Fleming Report has undeservedly ignored an interesting point in that naïve document. It is that at public schools the cost per pupil in teachers' salaries ranges up to £73 a year.

The comparable pre-war figure for the local education authority secondary schools of England and Wales was £20 10*s*. Individual areas varied by only a pound or two from this average. As for the present position, probably it would be an over-estimate to assume that pay increases have brought the figure up to £25.

Here seems a possible explanation of that higher level of scholarship which I, for one, am prepared to concede to the better public schools. But while it explains, it scarcely extenuates a situation of intolerable privilege.

For teachers are in short supply, so short that the raising of the school leaving age to 16 may be postponed for years. I suggest that Mr. Butler, instead of sending a few little hostages to Eton and Harrow, should ration what teaching there is. He might begin with a regulation that no child shall get more than £40 worth until every child who can benefit by it is getting £25 worth.

What an admirable experiment this would be. We should at last have the data to decide to what extent the merits of the public schools derive from a mystic inherent virtue, and to what extent they are the result of the sordid financial contrast I have indicated above.

Welwyn Garden City. CHARLES DALTON

SELF-DETERMINATION

SIR,—Can it be safely taken for granted that the elections held in the three Baltic States in 1940 and the subsequent inclusion of these States in the U.S.S.R. at their own request was really an act of fraud and force on the part of the Soviet Government?

It was understood at the time that the elections were not conducted by the Soviet authorities and it is not clear how the three new legislatures that then arose could have been compelled to apply for inclusion in the Soviet Union against their wishes. There seemed to be good, not to say urgent, reasons for taking this step as the alternative was early inclusion in the Third Reich. It did not involve forfeiture of self-determination as the Republics had the constitutional right of secession from the U.S.S.R., and have now also the right, while in it, of conducting their own foreign relations. If these appearances that the relations between the Soviet Government and the Baltic Republics are of the kind we should like to see obtaining between great states and their smaller neighbours in other parts of the world are completely deceptive, it seems to be a case where the evidence in the matter might well be mentioned.

Golders Green. J. J. MURPHY

THE READING PUBLIC

SIR,—Mr. Joad, judging by his article in the NEW STATESMAN & NATION on May 27th, 1944, assumes that, because people are not reading on train journeys now, they have no desire to read. I don't think that is generally the case and certainly it is not always so. Soldiers, and no doubt a number of civilians too, frequently have to make journeys at a few minutes' notice and may not be able to lay hands on a book. Travelling with soldiers, when they have had a fair warning of the movement, I have noticed that the majority armed themselves with books or magazines and one or two usually lurked round the station bookstalls in the hope of finding something of interest. It may be different in England now, but, if so, then there has been a sad change, as I can remember when I was in England some years ago, in peacetime, travelling to work on the 9.15 a.m. and noticing, in a sea of newspapers, quite a few books. It was the same on the return journey in the evening, with possibly less papers and some books. The types of book may not always have any educational value, but my picture of a clerk or a typist would be incomplete unless they had a book under their arm.

S. SGT.

South-East Asia Command

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JONATHAN CAPE

WHAT IS FREEDOM?

Sir,—I want to support Herbert Read's plea for a more realistic spirit in the hearts of those who mould governing thought to-day. In this district, we are giving increasing publicity to the following extract from the Philadelphia Declaration which was signed by the representatives of employers, trade unionists and governments of 41 nations and published in Hansard on 8th June, 1944:

> All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity. The attainment of the conditions in which this shall be possible must constitute the central aim of national and international policy. All national and international policies and measures, in particular those of an economic and financial character, should be judged in this light and accepted only in so far as they may be held to promote and not to hinder the achievement of this fundamental objective.

I am amazed by the general ignorance about this. Surely this is no conspiracy of secrecy? This objective can provide the lead so many of the young people tell me they want, and which I know so many of the old people need. Try it on any of your local Communists, local Labour Party Members or local Tories. See how their eyes light up when they learn that their representatives have signed that declaration in their name. It is a great pledge and the declsration is helping us here to do something realistic about achieving the result with a free spirit of mutual aid towards a noble common objective.

George Dickson,
Chairman, Medway Towns District
Rochester. Full Employment Council.

HOW THE BLIND KNOW

Sir,—Like many other readers I was extremely interested in the reference made by Critic regarding the "sixth sense" developed by blind persons. The opinion put forward in your issue of the 19th August by your correspondent, Thomas Todd, is enlightening, and in this connection may I quote from the distinguished philosopher, George Santayana, on "Psychic Phenomena"?

"Among the blind, the retina having lost its function, the rest of the skin is said to recover its primordial sensitiveness to distance and light, so that the sightless have a clearer premonition of objects about them than seeing people could have in the dark. So when reason and the ordinary processes of sense are in abeyance a certain universal sensibility seems to return to the soul; influences at other times not appreciable make them a sensible impression, and automatic reactions may be run through in response to a stimulus normally quite insufficient."

25, London Road, Stanmore. A. J. O.

COLLABORATIONISTS

Sir,—As a regular reader of your paper may I express my surprise at the attitude to French collaborators shown by the author of the article "Amateur Liberators."

I am sure that very few of us would wish to repay even the Germans with a dose of their own medicine—i.e., barbarous atrocities; but I am equally sure that these collaborators should be publicly shamed for their treachery. I can hardly agree with the writer's comment—"C'est brutal et ce n'est pas juste." No one could say that to have one's hair cut was physically painful; it is certainly wounding to vanity, which in the case of the women mentioned seems perfectly just.

To say that "war is not for women" is surely a little outdated? At any rate these three did quite well out of it!

June M. Pritchard

VOCATIONALISM IN EIRE

Sir,—In the article on Vocationalism in Eire in your issue of September 2nd Pat Dooley touches upon so many matters raised in the Report of the Vocational Organisation Commission that it is not possible in a letter to do more than refer to the implication that vocationalism is hostile to Labour interests and constitutes an approach to Totalitarianism. Pat Dooley overlooks the fact that vocationalism may take various forms. It might from another side be criticised as an approach to Guild Socialism. And Irish Labour might usefully consider it from this angle, and return to a fresh study of the plans and proposals of the Orage group. For vocationalism already exists and grows in Eire. The whole trend of modern economic development is quite definitely towards a form of vocationalism. At the moment the process is anarchic. There is no common purpose, no defined goal to link up the medley of occupational associations. Labour allies who stand for evolution rather than revolution must conform to an inevitable trend and use it as an agency to attain their ends. It cannot be denied that vocationalism is first cousin to corporatism and liable to similar abuses. Monopolies, combines, cartels, totalitarian tendencies will all threaten the workers under vocationalism, as they do to-day under our present system. But vocationalism can offer stronger weapons of defence and greater opportunities for peaceful penetration than we now possess, if we accept it with intelligence and vision. For vocationalism as defined in the Commission's Report is a social fabric which need not of itself obstruct Labour ideals, and might provide the agency to carry through the Irish Labour Party's policy of full employment and public control of currency and credit.

Killiney, Co. Dublin. Louie Bennett

DOROTHY EVANS

Sir,—Many readers of the New Statesman and Nation will mourn the sudden death of Dorothy Evans, who was associated throughout her life with the struggle for the emancipation of women. Her work, and her loss, are unique. Apart from all her public activities, from the early days of the militant Suffrage movement, when she suffered many imprisonments and forcible feeding, through the years of League of Nations work at Geneva, down to her running of the campaign for Equal Compensation for women for war injuries, there was no small battle for freedom that was not sure of a warm response from Dorothy Evans. Her quick sympathy was backed by an amazing grasp of factual procedure and clear-cut knowledge, for she had the rare gift of paying attention to detail. Those who knew her personally feel that the best memorial they can raise to her is to continue the work she was doing.

For this purpose an appeal is being prepared for funds to carry on, in particular, the two activities nearest her heart at the present time: the Women for Westminster movement, and propaganda for the Equal Citizenship Bill, a "blanket" Bill to amend every clause of sex-discrimination on the Statute Book, in one comprehensive measure. If sympathisers will write to Mrs. Billington-Greig, care of the Women's Publicity Planning Association, 14 Dartmouth Street, S.W.1, they will receive a copy of the Appeal setting out in detail the work Dorothy Evans has done and was doing, and can earmark their contributions according to their preference.

Phyllis Vallance
(Chairman, Six-Point Group)

BEATRIX POTTER

Sir,—I am collecting material for a short life of Beatrix Potter, the author of the Peter Rabbit children's books, and I should be glad to hear from any of your readers who possess letters, photographs or personal recollections of Beatrix Potter. Any letters or photographs which are lent will, of course, be most carefully handled and returned with the least possible delay.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

On September 1, 1939, the day when the Germans attacked Poland, I was in the village of Saint-Savin in Pitou; and the tall frescoed church was filled with people praying. "Da robur, fer auxilium"—the great familiar hymn was a cry from the heart of France, and having watched the country people as war came daily nearer I was convinced that they possessed the *robur*, the strength of soul, for which they were praying. Ten months later the common cry was that the French had lost their traditional fortitude; and the Marshal who had climbed upon calamity to power was the first to confess on their behalf a weakness that was proper to himself. Those of us in England who knew France best never believed the illustrious dotard. The French were defeated, as we must have been defeated, if the Channel had been no more impassable than the Maginot line: because they had far fewer men than the Germans, far fewer tanks and aeroplanes. Even if there had not been some traitors, the battle of France was mathematically certain to be lost. "A battle but not the war"—when General de Gaulle sounded his first magnificent appeal, he was speaking for millions of French men and women who were already fired with the same faith and obstinate courage. His words have found fruition in the deeds of the resistant, and those who did not know the French have been taken aback by the prodigies not only of daring but of organisation displayed by the *Maquis*.

As town after town in France has come into the news, liberation running in like a spring tide, flooding up channels between still uncovered rocks and sandbanks, we have many of us felt anxiety as well as joy. The devastation in Normandy has been atrocious; Lisieux and many smaller places are in ruins, the three Gothic fanes of Rouen, have been lacerated. Le Mans, which is one of the supreme cathedrals of the world, incomparable Chartres, Beauvais, in which the Gothic *élan* reached its stupefying zenith, and then Paris herself; in the South, Aix-en-Provence, Nîmes, Avignon: how impatiently we have awaited, how thankfully received, the assurance of their safety. And then the obscure places that we remember. One day the news came that the *Maquis* had taken Egletons, and I saw a grey ugly little town in the Corrèze, to which few foreigners can have had reason to penetrate, so ugly indeed that, instead of staying the night there as I had intended, I pushed on to Treignac. But this dour Egletons will henceforth be for me a name laurelled in victory.

I have been looking through three books about France recently published here, *Inoubliable France*, by Alice Jahier (Nicholson and Watson, 15s.), *France d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* (Hachette, 7s. 6d.), and *Images de Paris* by Maurice van Moppès (Hachette, 3s. 6d.). How these delightful photographs and drawings excite the longings and frustrations of Tantalus: here is Saint-Flour in the Cantal, nearly three thousand feet up on an arid promontory of rock; and on the opposite page St-Bertrand-de-Comminges in the Haute-Garonne, a tiny village with a cathedral on top of it like a swan upon her nest. Here again are the knotted gardens of Renaissance Villandry, looking over the "blonde" Loire, and two farmers punting their forage along the waterways that replace roads in the Marais poitevin.

> A voir glisser ainsi, le long des canaux feuillus, la "platte" du paysan, véhicule séculaire de ses travaux, de ses amouts, de ses deuils, il semblait que ces paysages paisibles fussent éternellement voués au plus calme bonheur . . .

But *France d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* continues with images of calamity, disembowelled villages and the overturned carts of the refugees mown down by the *Luftwaffe*. (How Greek the nemesis from the sky that lately has overtaken the retreating Germans on those same roads!) The other book of photographs, *Inoubliable France*, has a text steeped in nostalgia as well as the finest views of France I have ever seen, Paris and its monuments, Versailles, Albi, Saint-Tropez, le Cirque de Gavarnie and deliciously characteristic villages and churches. There is one photograph of a little roadside tavern, with the shadows of tiled eaves painting a tongued frieze upon the whitewash of the bare facade: a southern sun, a straight road, vines vivid with copper sulphate, grey rocks pushing through a hillside—a whole landsape was conjured by this shanty, which suddenly made one's longing for France intolerable.

Judged by her galaxy of architects Italy is far more rich. Nor are the monuments erected by the nameless more wonderful in France than in Italy. What indeed could be more wonderful than San Clemente, San Vitale, San Marco, San Zeno? And a Tuscan or Lombard farm is more elegant than its French counterpart. But for three hundred years France has replaced Italy as the focus of civilisation. If in letters she has been rivalled by England, in painting for a century now she has shone alone. And the daily life of the French has reflected something of their artists' style. Poorer than ourselves, they have been better educated in the art of living. And for this reason, when one thinks of France, it is not in the first place cathedrals or palaces that catch the mind's eye, but paved streets with shuttered houses, such as Utrillo used to paint, or check tablecloths by a riverside, or plane-shaded alleys boisterous with men lobbing their nail-studded bowls.

The French have terrible faults, but these are not the faults usually attributed to them by foreigners. Because they are animated, they are supposed to be frivolous. The week-end visitor judges France by Montmartre, as doubtless some of our American visitors judge England by the purlieus of Leicester Square. Let me rather complain that the French are hardly frivolous enough. Whereas we have a fortunate taste for compromise, they believe with imprudent passion in principles. They are altogether too ready to sacrifice themselves—and incidentally their country—for an idea. The pride they take in being logical often makes for the incoherence of French society. Their conversation is made delightful by irony, but they bring too little scepticism, too little empiricism, into the conduct of their politics. Corruption has, I think, been less dangerous to France than a far more widespread fanaticism. Their first need now is for unity, for the continuance of that unity they have found in resistance. In how many villages the parish priest and the schoolmaster, old champions of rival intolerances, have worked together against the invader! An English friend of mine who spent a long time working with the *maquis* brings exhilarating stories of a whole generation of young Frenchmen, who would once have devoted themselves to the organised antagonism of Right and Left, now ardent in a common cause. And the hero-worship that helps to unite them is given, not as in Germany to a dictator, but to the local leader who has shared their hardships and their perils. The fervour of these Gaullistes is not only for fighting but for reconstruction. The French have always had a genius for barricades; how glorious in its *panache* was the liberation of Paris. But more important still, I suggest, is that seriousness with which, after every disaster in their chequered history, the countryman always replants, the mason rebuilds.

This seriousness informs the intimacy of the peasant with every yard of his land, the pride of the mechanician in his improvising skill, the devotion that locks together parents and children, a devotion we may indeed think often excessive. (While as members of the family they never forget their duties, as citizens of the State they sometimes remember only their rights.) This seriousness is hostile to tolerance, and not always consonant with good nature. It fosters an industriousness that can become puritanical, unlovely and even ruthless. But it enables the French intellectual to persist singleminded in his purposes undismayed by a poverty that would drive his English counterpart to cynicism and pot-boiling. This seriousness is indeed the soil from which spring the flowers rendering France the most agreeable country in the world. Voltaire for all his wit was not less in earnest than Pascal; and even Montaigne, the most English of French authors, because the least ideological, hides beneath his Périgourdin smile a grave preoccupation with the nature of man. All the great French writers have studied the individual with a philosopher's interest in general laws. And thus it happens that while English literature has been the triumph of fantasy, theirs has been the triumph of observation and induction. A realism ordered by clarity of thought and fineness of handling has been the distinguishing mark of the French genius. Even Versailles, preposterous in size, is human in scale. The doors of Italian palaces are made for giants, so are the parts in Shakespeare. But Phèdre in her frenzy retains the measure of a woman. And whereas Poussin and Claude (like the architect of Chambord) were Italianate, the most characteristically French painters are the Maître de Moulins, Fouquet, Chardin and the Impressionists, men who were primarily obedient to their eyes.

Thus it comes about that our vision of France derives from their respect for the human scale. We think of a country arranged for men and women and children. We see rivers broad enough for navigation, but not too broad to bridge; cities from which you can walk out to orchard or olive-grove; market-stalls that are arranged as still lifes with cheeses and fruits still fresh from the neighbouring farms. All these we can best see through the eyes of the great painters who in the nineteenth century found inspiration in such quotidian sights, boating, picnicking, dancing, Melun, Pontoise, Argenteuil. How beautifully the unpretentious *savoir vivre* of the French is reflected in the shimmer of these pictures, flooded with colour, spontaneous impressions of happiness. Nothing could be more specifically French than this art which exalts the leisure after work, the joy of sitting by a river, with wine and fresh bread, waiting for the fish to rise or watching ripples tease the reflections of the willows.

And then Paris, twenty Parises, for each *arrondissement* has its own lineaments. What wonder that exiles like Mme Jahier and M. van Moppès find their homesickness overwhelming, when we who were only visitors are parched with longing for the streets and bridges and parks.

> Par un brillant matin de juin
> L'image du bonheur sur terre
> C'est de feuilleter un bouquin
> Quai Saint-Michel ou Quai Voltaire.

With such candid verses under his witty and sophisticated drawings M. van Moppès evokes the *marchande de quatre saisons*, the newspaper kiosks, the seller of chesnuts and oysters, the couples on their bicycles, the *marché aux puces*.

> Paris n'est pas une ville morte. Mille courants souterrains la parcourent. C'est la colère, c'est la révolte, c'est le Paris des grandes journées d'autrefois, le Paris du premier quatorze juillet que nous verrons surgir et étonner le monde . . .

Already his prophecy has been fulfilled.

When shall we be allowed to share the joys of the liberated French? Not, of course, until there are food and fuel to spare. But there are horrid whispers that even then the Treasury will place its veto on foreign travel. This would be an act hostile to France, for tourists are an important part of its economy. Still more serious, it would be an act hostile to civilisation, since it would block that mutual knowledge between the French and English peoples on which the continuance of Europe chiefly depends. Finally if we do not enjoy the liberty to travel, we shall have been reduced to the servile ignorance that totalitarian States inflict upon their subjects—we shall, in fact, have succumbed to the disease against which we have been fighting. Let us rather enlarge to the utmost the movement between England and France; let the schools and universities of the two countries exchange pupils; let all classes be encouraged to cross the Channel in each direction for their holidays. Separately our two populations are small: together we can be powerful to guard the liberties and values in which we alike believe.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

G. B. S.

Everybody's Political What's What. By BERNARD SHAW. *Constable.* 10*s.*

Anybody who was one of the younger generation in 1900 can never forget or pay his debt to G.B.S. It was he and Samuel Butler who were the pathfinders and led that younger generation so bravely and gaily out of the wilderness of the nineteenth century, though neither the leader nor the led, of course, realised that they were heading for the infinitely worse horrors of the twentieth century wilderness. In reading and before criticising his latest book; it is well to recall this and to begin in the spirit of "Let us now praise famous men" and Bernard Shaw among them. For he was a great iconoclast and the images which he threw down were those of Moloch, Belial, Pecksniff, and a thousand other nameless gods whose damp and downcast looks are recorded in the first book of *Paradise Lost.* But it would be a poor compliment to Shaw to review his book published in 1944 merely by praising the books which he had published before 1900. It is true that the injunction "de mortuo nil nisi bonum" is only to be followed if the dead man is still alive, and therefore does apply to most authors above the age of 60. But at 88 Shaw is less dead than most thinkers are at 58, and still therefore deserves to be treated seriously.

It is, no doubt, a wonderful book to have been written by a man of his age, yet one can hardly fail to regret that he should have written it. It is a kind of "Shorter Shaw," a compendium of his most important or persistent doctrines and dogmas. What he says here has almost always been said by him before in his plays and prefaces, and said better. The humour and wit are still there and the acrobatic nimbleness of mind; also the sound sense beneath the nonsense. Yet it reminds one of a gramophone record of a famous soprano, singing, when she was almost but not quite too old to sing, Schubert's *Nussbaum*—"What a lovely voice she had!" some one says, as the last note of the piano dies away and the needle grates into the groove. The book is, however, extremely interesting in one way. This kit-bag into which Shaw himself has jumbled all his social, political, economic, and metaphysical views makes one understand better than one did before exactly why he has had such an immense and so little influence upon his time. There is in the bag a great deal of iconoclasm, but also a great deal of what is, usually euphemistically, called "constructive" thought. About land tenure, the economic system, crime and punishment, education, and a dozen other serious subjects Shaw has any amount of sound and serious things to say, and more often than not he himself remarks that he said the same thing thirty or forty years ago, and no one then or since has paid the least attention to it. The world has listened to his nonsense, but turned a deaf ear to his sense. Now by talking nonsense you can become a distinguished dramatist and write admirable comedies; you can also become a great iconoclast, a destroyer of false and cruel gods. To do either of these things as brilliantly as Shaw has done them is a rare and magnificent achievement. But you cannot convert the world to sense by talking nonsense; you may destroy one false god, Moloch or Pecksniff, by laughing at him, but the world will immediately begin to worship another, and sometimes a worse—a Hitler in place of a Pecksniff. It is only by talking bleak, bare sense and converting the world to it that you can make the world sensible.

The explanation of Shaw's success and failure becomes clearer after reading this book. He explains it himself in the following passage:

> On the other hand, when William Morris said that whoever may be the best people to be in charge of the nation's children there can be no doubt that the parents are the very worst, he was overstating his case. It is always necessary to overstate a case startlingly to make people sit up and listen to it, and to frighten them into acting on it. I do this myself habitually and deliberately.

The important words are "habitually and deliberately." The world has not listened to the "serious" and "constructive" Shaw because he has talked nonsense to it habitually and deliberately. Of course, you can startle people into listening to you and even frighten them into "doing something" by overstating a case, but by doing that you cannot make them sensible or civilised or ensure that they will act like sensible and civilised people. To change barbarism into civilisation you have got somehow or other to get the world to listen to bleak, bare commonsense. That is why the greatest satirists, like Voltaire and Swift, do not *habitually* overstate their case. But the unbalance between sense and nonsense in a satirist is even more dangerous to the author than the audience. If you habitually and deliberately overstate your case, the form of your argument and of your own thought becomes stereotyped in the *reductio ad absurdum.* That is highly dangerous, particularly to your own mind and thought, for if you live and write long enough, you cease to be able to distinguish between your own sense and your own nonsense. If you try to sift the sense from the nonsense in what Shaw has to say about Pavlov as compared with what he has to say about Hitler, about the horrors of vivisection as compared with the horrors of Nazism, about the persecution and killing of human beings in his perfect state, about the franchise and democracy and doctors and many less important things, you will see that this has happened to him.

LEONARD WOOLF

NEW NOVELS

There were No Windows. By NORAH HOULT. *William Heinemann.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Horse's Mouth. By JOYCE CARY. *Michael Joseph.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Yeoman's Hospital. By HELEN ASHTON. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Barbers' Trade Union and Other Stories. By MULK RAJ ANAND. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The seventh age of man is a chancey theme for a novelist to tackle. The portrait of a dotard is the portrait of a bore, since senility's forte is repetition and complaint. In a novel in which the central figure is already suffering from softening of the brain, the writer must rely largely upon subsidiary characters to arrest and secure his reader's attention. But by emphasising too strongly the reactions to senility of those forced into contact with it there lies a danger that the novel may degenerate into a muzzy picture of impatience and self-control; and a part of the novelist's task should be to show us the world through the scared eyes of dotage—yet who save the psychiatrist (and he how truly?) can reconstruct the horror and confusion of a brain rotted by age, or comprehend a mind with no perspectives, in which past and present stalk and gambol on the same plane? The authoress of *There Were No Windows* has faced these difficulties; on the whole, rather bravely. Her book is a study of the last sad months of life of a remarkable literary woman, an emancipated Victorian lady formerly famous for her wit and notorious for her moral views, but now known merely as a mad old nuisance by the air-raid wardens and police-constables of North Kensington. We need not seek far for the prototype of Mrs. Claire Temple, and those who like myself have felt impelled by an idle curiosity to mount the leafy slopes of Campden Hill and to peer through a gate at the crumbling front-steps and narrow façade of South Lodge will find in this novel a whetstone for their morbidity. The scenery of the book is a Victorian villa in North Kensington, equidistant from High Street and Notting Hill. We are shown first the inside of this house—the sombre rooms piled with albums of newspaper cuttings; the landings on which Mrs. Temple hovers in maudlin bewilderment; the cosier kitchen below-stairs where lives the coarse and tyrannical cook-general. The second section of the book sets out the effects of Mrs. Temple's state of mind on the rare friends who still nerve themselves, from a grudging conscientiousness, to visit her. In the last part, the old lady, made violent by loneliness, suspicion and despair, wears herself out and dies. It is a sombre, and could have been a tragic history, but Miss Hoult fails to raise it above the tawdry and the inhumane. One might think of it as being too factual a record of its subject—so literal, so particularised as to become lifeless. Certain episodes—a scene in a pub, for instance, with one of those kindly young literary Americans that the war has brought to London—are beautifully vivid, but there are not enough of these. You leave this book with a shudder of discouragement—not only for its gloomy subject nor because Miss Hoult has spun a long book out of what might more wisely have been a short story; but because it seems, frankly, that the mass-observers had been too diligently busy, in 1940, on Campden Hill.

Mr. Joyce Cary also has a good deal to say by implication about the risks and the temptations of old age. This clever and boisterous novel is not, however, closely concerned with dotage or decay, but with life; life as it seems to the specious old rogue who narrates the story, Gulley Jimson, the old Chelsea painter, just out of prison when the book opens. In choosing to tell Jimson's later adventures straight from the horse's mouth, Mr. Cary has set himself a pretty series of fences to negotiate. His writing is as always accomplished and controlled, and for this reason alone it is odd that so much of *The Horse's Mouth* should be, positively, dull. In Mr. Cary's earlier novel, *Herself Surprised*, Mr. Jimson and his mistress, Mrs. Monday, made their debut, and when they were younger both Gulley and Sara were easier to watch and listen to. Sara, the handsome woman whom Jimson once famously painted, appears in the new book as a fat old woman with a red nose, a rheumy eye and comic umbrella, while Jimson has become too anecdotal and too crazed. The innumerable incidents of *The Horse's Mouth* cluster round Jimson's schemes for getting money. These range from pressing button B in empty telephone boxes to copying his own early work to palm off on a rich patron. Both his old and his new patrons are excellent satirical portraits—poor old Mr. Hickson in Portland Place with his "eyes like half-sucked acid-drops," and Sir William and Lady Beeder, a suave pair who return from America to find that old Jimson has emptied their flat, sold their collections and painted a giant fresco of feet all over one wall. The old man's irresistible urge to paint is the real theme of the book—the amoral urge before which every rule and loyalty must cede. Jimson struggles to steal or borrow money simply because he wants to find a studio and a wall on which to paint one of the vast compositions which keep forming in his head. When at last he has won fame, money, a studio and a wall, the Town Council of Greenbank condemn the building and order his fresco to be destroyed. Whatever you may personally feel about Mr. Jimson and Mrs. Monday, Mr. Plant the cobbler, and Coker the plain barmaid of the "Eagle and Child," you will not be able to deny their warmth and actuality, nor fail to feel the pressure and stress of Mr. Cary's noisy, often enigmatic, Greenbank society.

"Sophia could remember as clearly as if it had been yesterday the moment at which she first set eyes on Neil. It was down in the cold, tiled post-mortem room at St. Catharines." Miss Helen Ashton, in fact, has chosen to add a fresh volume to the long list of English medical novels and has set love to ripen amid the forceps and nurse's cuffs of a provincial hospital. It is tempting to confine oneself to quotations from this book, but that would not be fair to what is, after all, a very straightforward, three-dimensional account of a day in the hospital of a country town. Everything in *Yeoman's Hospital* is, alas, exactly as you would expect it to be, and after twenty-four hours of wandering down the wards with

Miss Ashton, of peering into the nurse's dormitories and nosing around in the Path. Lab., of eavesdropping on a board meeting and attending four operations in the theatre, you will find you know your way about Yeoman's blindfold. The anxieties and rivalries inevitable in such an institution are minutely retailed, and only the love story of Sophia Dean, the young surgeon, and Dr. Marriner, the freckled pathologist, is startling. This romance, which began in the dissecting room ("Neil went on tugging at the liver until he got it out, pushed it under her nose and said, 'Now, perhaps you can tell me what this chap died of,'" trickles on through a series of lovers' rows to its climax—when Sophia one evening finds her lover lying unconscious in a pool of vomit on the floor of his laboratory. He has perforated his duodenal ulcer. Sophia realises how much she loves him, decides to marry him, and within half-an-hour (feeling as tired as the surgical staff who have been called back to duty) we find ourselves again in the operating theatre watching Mr. Groom cut open Dr. Marriner. Miss Ashton offers her readers a very exacting day indeed; but perhaps their exhaustion is the just measure of her ability?

The miseries Mr. Anand brings before us in his first collection of short stories are far more moving, because more incurable, than those of Miss Ashton's abdominal patients. These excellent stories are instinct with indignation, and that passionate sense of injustice which this author's admirers will recognise as one of the prime characteristics of his work. It may be invidious to pick out one story among so many others that are equally good—but there is one called simply *On the Border*, which reaches a pitch of bitter intensity. It concerns the result, in a small border village of North-West India, of that inhuman form of punishment—the bombing by British aircraft of proscribed or "rebel" villages. Such penal action used sometimes to be recorded in a tiny paragraph of one of the European newspapers of India; it might even find its way into a London paper here. The Indian girl in the story, who sees her village with her child in it burning before her eyes, is one of the most harrowing characters in the whole book. Mr. Anand has become the recognised interpreter of Indian life (of what travellers of fifty years ago oddly spoke of as "the *real* India") to his English contemporaries. And with what grace and astringency he continues to perform his responsible role.

JAMES POPE-HENNESSY

MR. COWARD ABROAD

Middle East Diary. By NOEL COWARD. *Heinemann.* 6*s*.

This is the daily diary that Mr. Noel Coward kept from July to October, 1943, during his tour of North Africa and the Middle East and, apart from a few deletions and afterthoughts, it is as he wrote it.

Mr. Coward has done splendid work. He has entertained the Services, under the most unhelpful conditions, in ships and in the desert, sometimes with a grand piano, sometimes with a much less grand piano and a failing microphone and sometimes with neither. He has had to shout down the noise of trains passing nearby and appear nonchalant while flies crawled up and down his face and flew in and out of his mouth. He has in fact (and it is a hard thing to ask of an actor) risked his reputation as a performer at almost every appearance. He has visited numerous hospitals and enlivened the boredom of the patients in them. Since the diary was written he has made a further tour, in South Africa, India and Burma.

All this is admirable and it is therefore sad that his diary should make the unfavourable impression that it does. There is throughout much about the Navy—"The familiar Naval magic has already taken charge of me . . . I feel most serenely at home. This is unquestionably a happy ship, I felt it immediately when I came on board with the Captain this afternoon. He is a nice man . . . I had a sudden impulse to shout very loudly with sheer pride and pleasure and excitement. . . . There is a rating on the Bridge who is really magnificent . . . how Winnie [Miss Clemence Dane] would love to paint him. . . . It's lovely being at sea again. . . The Admiral . . . quite one of the nicest men I have ever met. . . . The Captain couldn't be nicer. . . . I shall become a bore if I go on any more about the perfect manners of the Navy." Shall?

The tour is not roses, roses all the way; it is, rather, roses, stinkwort roses, and various people and things come in for some rather petulant disapproval; a Commanding Officer and the lavatory (outside) at a hospital, the "needless formalities" of an H.Q. at Cairo, "certain sections of the English press," a "bloody-minded" troop audience, Mr. Spike Hughes (who had criticised unfavourably one of his broadcasts), a "horrid lunch at the hotel," a batman (who "occasionally blundered in and out wearing a contemptuous expression.") Never mind; there are two Guards Officers who "between them . . . created an atmosphere of well-bred privileged England at its best, I had a mental picture of Sycamores, tennis courts, green lawns and rather yellowing white flannels."

Interspersed with the work (and it is extremely hard work) there are dinners and parties and junketings with Tony and Miles and Jackie and Joe (the footnotes explain to whom the Christian names belong) and only an occasional *longueur*: "went home to dinner which was restful and unspectacular. Just a couple of Generals and a rather drawn-out discussion of the Windsors. Bed early."

Mr. Coward appreciates the importance of good Anglo-American relations but they will scarcely be helped by his description of some visiting American Senators ("an uninspiring group of men . . . oh! my God, they were dull . . . aggressively home-spun figures.") Nor will American mothers, a highly influential section of America, take very kindly to a reference to "mournful little Brooklyn boys lying there in tears amidst the alien corn with nothing worse than a bullet wound in the leg or a fractured arm," lard this as he may with praise of "tough men from Texas and Arizona."

There are (and one is grateful for them) several excellent jokes but they do not save the day. For the work that he has done we can have nothing but praise; he has been most generous, self-sacrificing and courageous. And for his book, let us leave Mr. Coward with the last word: "Perhaps in France writers are revered too much. Possibly our English method of treating them with suspicion tinged with disdain is more healthy in the long run."

ARTHUR MARSHALL

RUMANIA

Why Rumania Failed. By PAVEL PAVEL *Alliance Press.* 8*s*. 6*d*.

The minor States are once more claiming our attention, and Dr. Pavel has stepped in with an apologia for Rumania and a plea for her preservation as an independent State within her 1938 boundaries. He thus advances claims against Hungary and Bulgaria as well as the Soviet Union. These claims in some degree express the international difficulties of all small States. Only with Soviet help can Rumania hope to regain Transylvania and the Banat from Hungary and the Southern Dobrudjea from Bulgaria, but who

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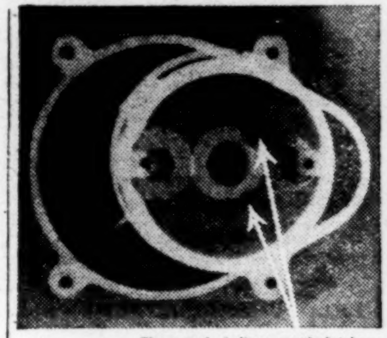

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F. 171

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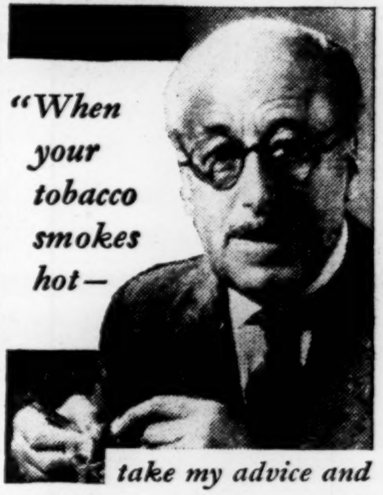
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is going to support her claims on Bessarabia and Cernauti? General Antonescu chose German support, achieving only a legacy of hatred in the indisputably Ukrainian "Transdniestria." Dr. Pavel puts his trust in Great Britain, in the hope that she will place her influence at the peace-table behind a very loose confederation of Balkan States.

In the nineteenth century British interest in Rumania was lively. She blocked Russian expansion towards Constantinople and provided grain needed to feed an increasing industrial population in Britain. From this period dates the European Danube Commission, formed at the instance of Britain and France (1856), and charged with maintaining navigation from the mouth of the Danube up to Braila, the Rumanian grain port. It continued to function almost up to the beginning of the present war.

With the opening up of American and Australian granaries and the disappearance of the Russian threat to the Straits, these interests lapsed. In the twentieth century, oil has been the chief British stake in Rumania. British capital controlled around 50 per cent. of the Rumanian oil production, a fact which Dr. Pavel inexplicably fails to mention. There can be little doubt that neither these interests nor the considerable American share in Rumanian oil will be tamely abandoned. The Soviet policy of not openly challenging the social set-up in Rumania is certainly in part based on this consideration. Nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly clear that the U.S.S.R. is adapting the *cordon sanitaire* to her own ends, and willy-nilly Rumania and her neighbours will have to fit into this scheme of things. Neither British policy nor the traditional cultural links which bind the Rumanian bourgeoisie and aristocracy to France, as they once bound the same classes in imperial Russia, is likely to affect this. Rumania was sandwiched between the U.S.S.R. and Germany, and with the defeat of the latter she will have to come to an agreement with her powerful north-eastern neighbour.

The U.S.S.R. has offered her the return of the territories lost by the Vienna award, even though the Southern Dobrudjea has not so far been mentioned. This should go far to restore the economic potentialities of the country, which are considerable. What will be required is capital and then more capital, unless the country pulls herself up by her own bootlaces as the U.S.S.R. has done. The Rumanian people is a poor one, and here we come to Dr. Pavel's greatest omission. He deals with the division of the large estates in 1922. He also mentions that the peasants were not provided with sufficient capital to till their newly acquired land. But he gives practically no space to the real conditions of the peasantry, who account for the vast majority of the population. In 1935 a survey covering 150 thousand holdings showed for instance that 37 per cent. had no draught animals, in a country where mechanisation is at its most rudimentary. In Transylvania many of the Rumanians, as opposed to the rather more prosperous Hungarian and German minorities, remain semi-migratory shepherds.

It is here that Rumania must seek her tasks and their solution may well demand close co-operation with her neighbours. Dr. Pavel rightly warns against facile advocacy of confederation where there is no common intellectual and political groundwork. But Rumania's neighbours will have to face similar problems and the common attack on them can provide the one basis that there is for political co-operation of any but the most fleeting kind. An alignment of the radical peasant forces in South-Eastern Europe, represented in Rumania by Maniu, once an advocate of an agreement with the U.S.S.R., can succeed where the Balkan and Little Entente, which were directed against Bulgaria and Hungary, failed so miserably. They, too, can make a reality out of the Rumanian sham democracy. Rumania was the classic land of corruption, and it is nonsense to speak of democracy in a country where the civil service is corrupt, where governments have always manipulated elections and where the peasantry go in terror of the *gendarme*. In his desire to make out a case Dr. Pavel glosses over these blemishes.

Maniu himself is an old man, but the forces that he represents can hope to master the future, if they break the hold of the upper middle class, traditionally represented by the Liberal Party and the Bratianu "dynasty" whose orientation is French and anti-Soviet.

W. L. LUETKENS

Adventures of a Boer Family. By VICTOR POHL. *Faber*. 7s. 6d.

Victor Pohl was a boy at the time of the South African war, but even so he was before the end placed in a concentration camp on a false charge of carrying information to the fighting Boers. His older brothers were on commando, and all were very lucky to come through the war alive, though one of them suffered badly from malaria, picked up in a prisoner of war camp in India.

During the first part of the war Victor was living on their farm in the Free State with his parents and sister, and the vicissitudes of farm life during war make extremely interesting reading. Through the good offices of an aunt he was released from detention on parole, attended a school conducted by a sympathetic Scot, was taken up by the British troops who admired his pluck and adopted him as their boxer in local encounters, at which he demonstrated little science but an abundant capacity for taking and giving punishment.

This intimate and revealing book is well worth reading, since it gives a picture of Boer life, of their courage and endurance, of their perseverance in the grimmest privations, such as does not appear in the official accounts of the war. An amazing optimism sustained them at their worst moments, and it was difficult for General de Wet to make them understand, even at the hour of surrender, that they had lost the war. Life on the farm and life on commando formed a closely-knit pattern. Their postal services, surprisingly, never failed them; their shops continued to do business; their civil life did not cease to function, though all of military age were intermittently in the field, at any rate in the remoter parts of the Free State.

With a single exception the boy Victor was lucky in the British officers and troops whom he encountered, and the result is that there is no rancour in this book. There is not the hostile criticism one might have expected, and it is not the author's fault that he portrays us as for the most part inept at war, since we undoubtedly were. The war seemed to the Boers to be unjust, as in fact it was, but it was this injustice which gave them faith in their ultimate victory, since it could not be that Providence would allow right to succumb to guilty might.

His sincerity, humour and fairness are at all times manifest. "All things considered, the treatment received at the Greenpoint Camp was good," a statement in striking contrast to German propaganda of the period. "The food was fair, even if there was little variety," but there was apparently no fruit and few vegetables—a very different South Africa from that to which we moderns are accustomed.

We were considerably assisted by the natives, who, apart from acting as spies and guides and giving useful as well as prejudiced information to our forces, formed armed bands of robbers and brigands and for a time harassed the Free-Staters. They felt this native "treachery" very bitterly and, not unnaturally, took strong action whenever possible, but it has not apparently

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curred to Mr. Pohl that this was the direct nsequence of the Boer attitude to the natives. owever, since the author eschews politics, we y well follow his example and thank him for honest and a memorable book.

ABD EL NASR.

dible Fungi. By PROF. JOHN RAMSBOTTOM. *King Penguin.* 2s.

"A fungus foray" need no longer be the subject for school-marm imitation by Arthur Marshall. Forays e being organised in many parts of England, and the arch and collection of edible species have become a untry house week-end game. The present enthusism was no doubt started as a wartime endeavour to place the lack of taste and originality in cooking. nce having started, this habit must persist and ecome popular, and John Ramsbottom's King enguin book on edible fungi with the precise and arming illustrations by Rose Ellenby ought to have ecome a household work in every cottage in every illage. Any fungi remotely similar to a poisonous pecies have been scrupulously avoided, and the rrifying symptoms after eating *Amanita Phalloides*, e of the three deadly species in the most dangerous *manita* family, need not be feared if only the fungi hown here are tested. It is a pity that the *Hydmun epandum*, one of the most delicious of all fungi, nd certainly easily distinguishable from any poisonous pecies is not included since as a filling for pancakes r a flan it is surpassed by none. Uses of the fungi are any and varied, and range from the making of Chinese ink from the black spored *Coprinus* species, nd the making of dye from the *Tricholoma Personatum* o the concocting of an illicit and dangerous intoxicatg "drug syrup" from the red and white spotted *manita Muscaria*, which was used in Siberia by emote tribes for winter orgies. After the assured uccess of this excellent but limited book, it is to be oped a further and more complete volume, with imilar coloured illustrations, will be published.

n Outline of Modern Russian Literature (1880-1940). By ERNEST J. SIMMONS. *Oxford University Press.* 6s.

Professor Simmons is Professor of Slavic (*sic*) Languages and Literatures at Cornell University, U.S.A. His book sets out to be "a brief guide to the rincipal writers and works of modern Russian terature for those who do not know Russian." Those who are interested in the subject but have een put off by the stodgy appearance of full-length ccounts will find this short summary very useful. ts seventy-four pages describe the main characteristics f Russian literature during the last eighty years, nd say just enough about the chief writers to make an interested reader want to dig deeper; and as an aid to right pronunciation all Russian names are accented—a practice other literary historians might follow. Those, however, who are already familiar with the work of D. S. Mirsky and Gleb Struve will not find much new material in it. Mr. Simmons echoes most of their judgments and even repeats Struve's notorious mistake about Bezyménski. But he is more objective in his criticisms than Struve and the last chapter is probably the best summing-up in English of the aims and achievements of Socialist Realism that has yet appeared.

Week-end Competition

No. 763

Set by G. W. Stonier

Competitors are asked to celebrate in verse (with the aid of Bradshaw) any railway line that catches their fancy. Entries to be received by September 25th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 760

Set by Prod

You are a subaltern officer newly posted to a unit in the field. Write a letter to your wife including, in not more than 150 words, a character sketch of your company commander. Some clues to his character are provided by the names which, following modern military usage, he has given to the company trucks. They are "Kedgeree," "Lord Curzon," "Louise Labé," "Mildew," and "Gaumont British."

Report by Prod

There were few entries for this competition. The misprint may have discouraged some competitors, others, including those who did enter, found it difficult to extract a highest common factor from apparently diverse clues. The diversity was, of course, itself a clue. It was surely a case for playing in reverse a game not unlike that which turns chalk into cheese by changing a few letters at a time or treating a word as one of the elements in a Joycean layer cake. The names which soldiers give to weapons, vehicles and other inanimate objects draw on many sources of inspiration. It may be a playful nostalgia, which probably accounts for Kedgeree. It may be a recognition of qualities in common. I suspect that Louise Labé had dented wings and a wayward steering gear. In some cases it is an excuse for using words and sounds which please or shock the ear. Mildew was probably in this class. There is also the motive of mild opprobrium. Possibly Lord Curzon i due to this if you exclude the nostalgia. The company commander was clearly not a professional soldier. If he had been all the names would belong to one category. They would all have been breakfast dishes, elder statesmen or words beginning with M. He is probably not a great reader, most probably one who reads a limited number of books again and again. Louise Labé like Horace, Petrarch and Kipling, if read a second time, tends to elbow rivals off her fans' bookshelves.

Since, thank goodness, I am not myself a competitor, I will pursue the analysis of this officer's character no further. None of the competitors goes even so far, but because Constance Sewell wrote the sort of letter a wife would enjoy reading and R. S. Jaffray wrote the sort of letter a man might enjoy writing, they rather undeservedly deserve a guinea each.

No, darling, he can't be the Farler your people knew on the Rhine. He spells it Fowler, it seems, and he was in India then.

He had some of the kitchen tins burnt because he said the men were getting boils. George takes a Freudian view of his horror of bacteria.

He doesn't follow the well-known pattern after all, although he has the usual six stories all beginning, "When we were on the retreat." He married a French girl and was military expert to Gaumont British. He wrote "Lord Curzon" for Arliss.

Then he went to the B.B.C. He did an "Infidelity" broadcast with Stephen Potter, bits from Othello, Drayton and Somerset Maughan. They had that Ukrainian song "The Cossack, he is not my husband," and "Jenny got a husband, but he wasn't hers." He did the Anglo-Indian Clubhouse bits. He says it was a knock-out.

CONSTANCE SEWELL

Dear Joan,

My skipper continues to intrigue me. I think he is one of those fictitiously-named coves who win prizes in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, and moreover understands "Books in General." And he's got us all thinking like that. He has, at any rate, nicknamed me Le Grand Meaulnes, after a bombing stunt I put my platoon through the other day. I do not know if he expects me to justify this by incursions into "routes allemandes," but that is what I hope to do, with survival as a variant, Alain Fournier or not being the inspiration. The time we took a village whose name I haven't yet ascertained I saw him stalking down the street with a writing pad and pencil, his revolver loose on its sling, noting the shop names.

Yours,
Darby.

R. S. JAFFRAY

Company Meeting

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PICTURE

The seventeenth ordinary general meeting of the Associated British Picture Corporation, Limited, was held on September 7th in London.

Sir Philip Warter (the chairman) said that the total trading profit of the group as a whole, after providing for E.P.T. and Deferred Repairs, amounted to £2,106,460. The directors recommended the payment of a final dividend of 7½ per cent., less tax, and a bonus of 2½ per cent., less tax, making, with the interim dividend of 7½ per cent., less tax, a total of 17½ per cent. for the year, leaving £134,528 to be carried forward.

Notwithstanding the difficulties in adequately staffing the cinemas, the restrictions on repairs and renewals of equipment and the continued shortage of product, the corporation had had a record year's trading, providing first-class entertainment for an average of 4,500,000 people per week. The Pathe Gazette continued to rank in the forefront of the popular newsreels, and its cameramen were with the British Army on the Continent.

The report recently submitted to the President of the Board of Trade by the Cinematograph Films Council had been carefully studied by the directors and in their opinion they must, in the interests of the shareholders, oppose the recommendation for any form of control of the industry contained in the Committee's report.

The trading profits of the group were being maintained, and the results for the year should be in every way satisfactory. He looked forward to the future with confidence.

The report was adopted.

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